FORTEAN TIMES

strange phenomena - curiosities - prodigies - portents - mysteries

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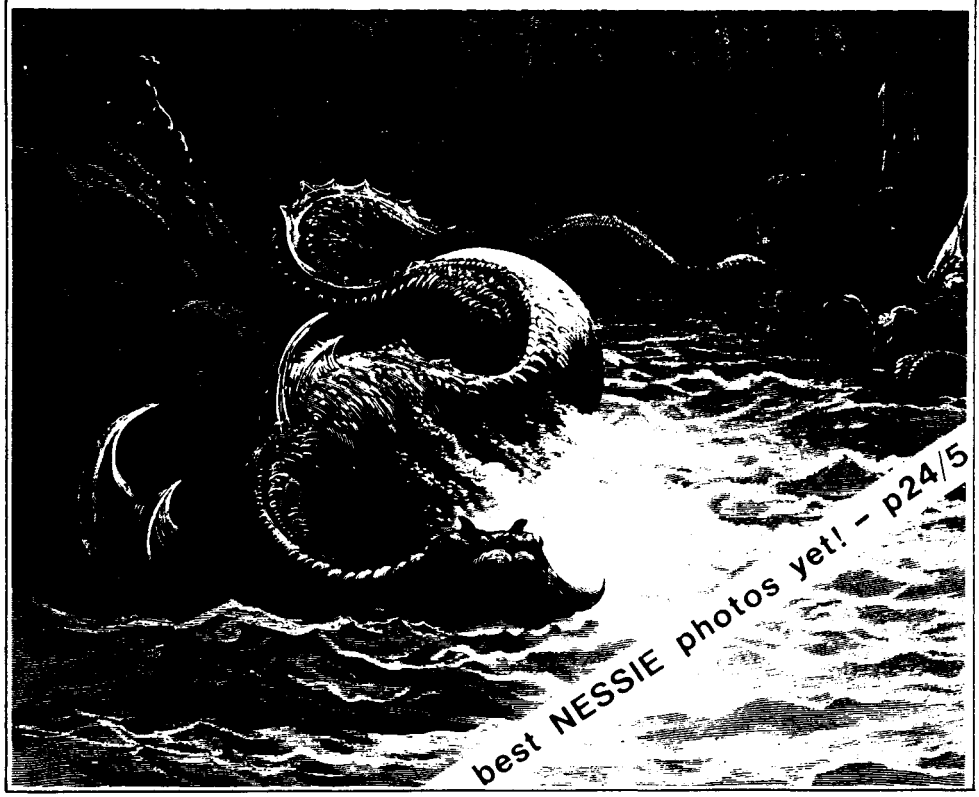

randy wraiths .. 3 more on levitations .. 13

LARRY ARNOLD: fires & leys .. 6 mutilations .. 26

JOHN MICHELL: library angels .. 15 R SCHADEWALD: fishfalls .. 31

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FORTEAN TIMES

A Contemporary Record of Strange Phenomena

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FORTEAN TIMES is a non profitmaking quarterly miscellany of news, notes and references on current and historical strange phenomena, related subjects and philosophies. Formerly 'The News'. Affiliated to the International Fortean Organisation (INFO), and the Society for the Investigation of The Unknown (SITU), and other Fortean journals in continuing the work of Charles Fort (1874-1932).

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The editor regrets that it is not always possible to reply to all correspondence. Acknowledgements of money received will be sent via the following issue of FT.

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SUMMER 1977

MONSTERS IN THE BUSH!

A few weeks ago my phone rang...it was Ken Campbell with some crazy scheme to meet Doc Shiels (our Cornish monster maniac) and have him star as Orson Welles in a dramatization of Keel's Mothman Prophecies...something like that! Well Ken went to Cornwall to meet Doc, and together they hatched a burlesque which will boggle your brains. To be called evocatively, Distant Humps, it chronicles Doc's encounters with UFOs, witches, fairies, Morgawr & Nessie (see p18), the ominous Owlman of Mawnan, and Norman, who bequeathed Doc the entire universe (except this Earth, which is owned by the Americans, Norman said). If you can't imagine that, you'll have difficulty with the fact that Doc's talented family (including the dogs) also appear in it - as does Illuminatus! veteran, Chris Fairbank. The evening's song, dance and stories will warp space/time around the Shepherd's Bush Theatre, London, from 6 September 1977. Watch your papers for programme details. Who said Fortean music-hall was dead...

TRUSS FUND...

We gratefully acknowledge kind donations from the following: Larry Arnold, Lionel Beer, DI Baxter, Curtis Carlson, Mrs Phyllis Dixon, Mrs V Martin, Olive Oltcher.

TLH ANNIVERSARY

Our congratulations go to editor Paul Devereux and his small but devoted team on our sister mag, The Ley Hunter, which is a year old in its new format, and which has nearly doubled its circulation in that time. Keep it up, lads! TLH prices have gone up recently, so check our journal review section, and our own panel (on p40) for latest rates.

UFOs & MUFOB & FT

Even with 40 pages at our disposal we are finding problems fitting what we would like to have each issue. UFO data presents particular problems for us in that modern ufology has become a whole new field with its own complexities. We have long admired and supported the excellent work of John Rimmer, Peter Rogerson and Roger Sandell, the main core of the Metempiric UFO Bulletin, and publicly proclaim it to be a worthy sister mag to FT. Since we get more than we can immediately print in all categories of Forteana, we will from now on pass on all our UFO and related material to the team at MUFOB, and urge you to take out a subscription to it (see our journal reviews for details). Naturally Fortean implications of UFO data will continue to be discussed in these pages and we still welcome clippings on the subject - we'll copy and pass them on.

It is some time since our last round up of sexy spectres (NEWS 12/22). The following have appeared in our files since then: we select only those stories having either acknowledged sexual overtones, and those in which the percipient actually felt the ghost's touch. The more 'mundane' bedroom phantoms, whose intentions remain unproved, have been exorcised from this listing, and will appear at a later date.

Among the stories in our file it is noticeable that the great majority feature female percipients and male ghosts. There may be some social and metaphysical significance to this, which may also apply to all forms of sexual encounter with the 'supernatural', but this notion will have to await further research. For the moment, we merely present the data...

UNCANNY UNION

Tales in which the percipient actually achieves union with a ghostly partner, i.e., in which the ghost has an apparent physical reality, though very common in folklore and tradition, rarely figure in modern accounts. We have but one to hand currently, and that is somewhat apocryphal. The Sun, 18 Apr 74, reporting an appeal by the Institute of Psychophysical Research, Oxford, for personal ghost stories, has the following, without names or details: A young man met a girl who moved in with him, "was the perfect partner" for a few days, and then disappeared. When he searched for her, he found she had died the day before he met her. No further details.

GHOSTLY BED-PARTNERS

Normanton, Notts: The Hallam family, Peter, Mary and their daughters Rebecca,21, and Frances, 16, and son Tom,13, living in a 16th century farmhouse, appear to share the premises with a family of ghosts. The men of the family have seen the ghosts of an elderly couple. Another ghost, unseen except as a light in the shape of a person (but presumably male) reserves his attention for the ladies. After merely sitting on their mother's bed, he turned a more passionate attention to the daughters of the house. Frances, just going to sleep, heard heavy breathing; then the sheets were lifted off, and 'someone' got into bed beside her and put his arm round her waist. This then slithered down the bed and left at the foot. After that, she was regularly followed upstairs to bed. Rebecca also heard heavy breathing and sighing, but in her case the ghost remained outside the bed: bumping at the foot and then pressing on her feet and thighs, feeling like an animal crawling up the bed. She has also had her bottom slapped by the ghost in broad daylight. The occurrences began in June 1975, and we have no record of their ending, although Peter Hallam was calling in a team of psychic investigators. Interestingly, the phenomena peak at the full moon. (D.Mirror, 7th Sept, 76, Sun, 25 Feb, 77).

Newcastle, Staffs is the current address of Mrs S Fernyhough, though it is unclear where she was living at the time of the incident about which she wrote to the Sun, 22 Dec 76 (Cr:V Martin). When she

was 14, she slept in the same room as her sister, and one night felt someone get into her bed and cuddle close. When she realised it was not her sister, she went cold and her hair stood on end. Whereupon she jumped out of bed and got in with her sister. The incident was not, apparently, repeated.

PHANTOM FONDLERS

Newtown Burgoland, Leics: The Belper Arms public house has a ghost known as Fred (presumably a nickname), who is most active when alterations are being made to the building. He first appeared some years ago, when the previous landlord was pulling down an ancient staircase in the 12th century inn, and is believed to be buried at the site of an old well close by. Young ladies, both bar-staff and customers, have their bottoms pinched or patted by Fred; a seemingly not unpleasant experience, as they frequently return for more. More mature ladies find themselves tapped on the shoulder, the notion being that Fred wants them to turn round so he can size them up. Men, on the other hand, feel a phantom hand over their nose and mouth, can't breathe, and have to rush out into the open air, sometimes having to get beyond the old well before they can breathe freely once more. Fred doesn't seem to like men much...but he did take a special liking to Janet Owen, of Ward End, Birmingham, 30 miles away. He followed her home one night after she left the pub, and appeared at the foot of her bed for a few seconds, before fading away in a misty haze. He was described as pale, with dark hair, wearing a high-collared jacket, and having glazed eyes. There's got to be a joke in that somewhere...(News of the World, 21 Dec 75, The Sun, 25 Feb, 77).

Austin, Texas: Miss A Guerrero writes to Fate (No 322, Jan 77) requesting advice. She and her sister bought a house in 1965, and made several alterations. At about 10pm, June 24, 1972, she was in the kitchen when her buttocks were slapped, first on the right side, then on the left. Since then she has frequently felt a 'presence' in the kitchen, and avoids it after 10pm. Her sister is not affected by the phenomenon.

Roldanillo, Colombia: we end this section with a curiosity that is tantalisingly short of detail. 16-year-old Maria Elena Vazquez was apparently the object of attention of something which ripped a crucifix from her bedroom wall, attacked her, tore her pajamas to shreds, mysteriously marked her school books and left behind a knife, vase, and shoe. A Roman Catholic priest blessed her room, but it's uncertain whether he carried out the full Catholic rite. A local newspaper, 'El Occidente' carried out a 2-day investigation, and blamed the attacks on a lesbian maid...which has originality, if nothing else...(Atlanta Journal & Constitution, 8 Feb 76. Cr:M Hall)

SPECTRAL SPOILSPORTS

The other side of the coin naturally turns up too: ghosts which seem to take exception to normal human sex. Rather than being impartial guardians of morality, however, they tend to have a close personal connection with either the percipient or the place, as the following examples show...

London (?): We note briefly another anonymous case, from an article on Spiritualism (D. Mirror 24 Mar 77). A 21-year-old girl had rented a flat in a Victorian mansion, and experienced almost nightly hauntings for 6 months, especially when she was alone in the flat with a man. Men were tipped out of bed in the middle of the night, and suggestive meter-readers had their record-books hurled downstairs. A seance was held, at which the medium identified the ghost as a former serving girl in the house, who did not want sex performed before the young baby she had before she was murdered. The medium's Guide was said to have led the ghost to the 'other side'.

Kensington, London: Frank Scott-Elliot's ghost was regular, if nothing else, calling on him every Tuesday and Friday at 3.48am. Named Helen, she was supposed to have been a servant in the house containing Frank's flat, 100 years previously, who killed herself over a love affair. As a ghost, she was jealous of other women in the place, and would knock on the door at her usual time. If Frank had company and didn't get up to let her in, tape-recorders and

television sets would begin to fly round the room. Frank finally decided to have the flat exorcised, which was duly done in 1968. Although the disturbances stopped, Frank then got into a run of bad luck: he lost the flat, his private investigation business, boat and car, and is now homeless and on the dole; his girl-friend died from an accidental overdose of sleeping pills, and when he eventally married, he parted from his wife after 3 months. He blames it on Helen being jealous that he's no longer around, and he may be right..,but if she's no longer around either..? (News of the World, 14 Nov 76).

London: Tonia Campbell, widow of speed-record breaker Donald Campbell, claims that her late husband is still around to give her advice, particularly, it seems, in partnership matters. He has been known to appear at the foot of the bed and give a 'thumbs down' signal to her current partner. One can only wonder if any man, or ghost, in such a position would give a thumbs up...(Unidentified news cutting; & Sun, 25 Feb 77)

Pluckley, Kent has a reputation as Britain's most haunted village, and has 13 ghosts to prove it...it also has at least 13 broken marriages from the last few years. Locals blame it on spectral interference, though there seems to be no direct evidence of a connection. But in a village that numbers the Screaming Man amongst its spectral inhabitants, perhaps its not surprising there's a little tension in the air...

FOLLOW-UPS

Worksop, Notts: Readers concerned for the honour of Beryl Gladwin (See News 12/22 for encounter with an amorous, booted ghost) may relax, for a while, at least. The latest news we have (Sun, 25 Feb, 77) is that the aggressively caressive spectre has been driven off by the willpower of clairvoyant Simon Alexander. He is, however, expected to return..!

Charlton, London: The story of Sir William Langhorne, another supposed astral rapist, and the questionable foundations of the tale, have been discussed before (NEWS 12/22, 14/20). A couple of things have come up since then. In 1973 (at about the time when the Langhorne tale seems to have been taking its current shape) a movie was made called "...And now the Screaming Starts!", in which the ghost of a nobleman rapes the wife of his descendant. The movie was based on the novel 'Fengriffen' by David Case. While we can find no evidence of a connection, the juxtaposition in time is interesting.

Even ghosts, alas, are subject to exploitation, and old Will Langhorne is no exception. In an obvious publicity stunt, the local council's entertainments officer, Dennis White, organising the annual Greenwich Festival, arranged a midnight ghost hunt at Charlton House, and took out a £3-million insurance policy against any visitor dying of fright at the appearance of Langhorne...a fairly certain way of making the papers. (Evening News (London) 27 Apr,77; Kentish Independent 5 May 77) As nothing more has been heard, we can only assume that old Will showed a proper disdain for the proceedings.

AIRSHIP HOAX

From Lucius Farrish, Arkansas:

Having finally had a chance to read your article on the 1897 airship hoax in FT20, I thought I would drop you a few lines to add a comment or two.

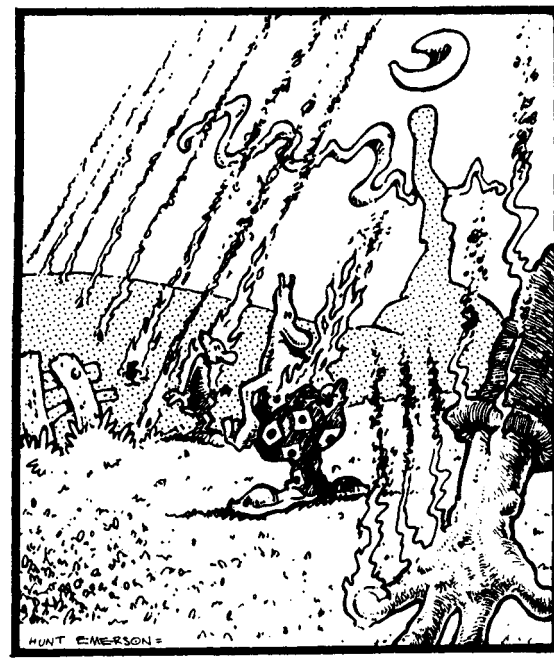
First, although all of us hate to 'lose' what appeared to be one of the more reliable airship accounts from the 1896-97 period, I, for one, am glad to have the case cleared up. As you know, I have been rather closely involved with it over the years, so I feel a responsibility for having given it a measure of publicity in various articles. Although I obviously did not know the true nature of the incident until Jerry Clark's recent investigations, I would like to offer my apology for inadvertantly misleading the readers of my articles in Fate, FSR and other publications.

Cont on p33...

We begin the first of 3 extracts from ABLAZE! The Case for, and Cases of, Spontaneous Human Combustion, a forthcoming book by Larry E Arnold. This part examines a correlation between pyrophenomena and Ley Lines; part 2 looks closer at these fire 'leynes'; & pt 3 will focus on the 'Binbrook Triangle' in East Anglia...

FIRE LEYNES

by LARRY E ARNOLD



Charles Fort postulated that our data relates "not to 'spontaneous combustion of human bodies', but to things or beings, that, with a flaming process, consume men and women." (1)

Research for ABLAZE! has revealed some curious incidents of beings (human or otherwise)and the fires to which they subject others. In this highly abridged article, however, we shall examine the other category mentioned by the avatar of the Unwelcomed - the nature and effect of "things" on weird combustions.

A BEVY OF BAFFLING BLAZES AROUND BIRMINGHAM.

Unknown to its residents, England's Midlands was preparing to engage in a series of sinister searings in the early 1970s. Things were about to get pretty 'hot' in the bustling city of Birmingham for firemen (who are trained to determine the origin of fires), for coroners (who are employed to ascertain the precise cause of a person's death), and for some of the people living there.

8 April 1973: John McRory is the victim of "accidental death" from a fire for which "no definite cause" can be found (3).

20 October 1973: Octogenarian William McLeod is found in a fire-damaged room in Nechells, Birmingham; no mention of how much--or how little--damage is done to the death chamber itself (3). On 26 October we learn that an 18-year-old patient at Birmingham's All Saints hospital is shrouded in flames, her bed found smouldering. She was taken to the Burns Unit. Matches are suspected, but no one wants to go on record as to why the victim became a "flaming torch"(3). On 28 October one is told about 23-year-old Diane Mold running across her yard in flames; she too goes to the Burns Unit. It is "believed" she fell on hot coals, revived in time to rip off the burning clothing and don a coat before making a dash for help; it is not stated whether Miss Mold agrees with this scenario (3).

In a corner of the Kaur living room sits 7-month old Parvinder in his pram; both are ablaze. The child is rushed to the Burns Unit while the fire officials concern themselves with the origin of this disaster. They come up with nothing, save that "kids could have been playing with matches". The

matches, if there were any, are either magical or the victims of another phenomenon (teleportation): they disappear so the investigators can't find them!(4).

One week later the same Burns Unit is treating the fire-damaged legs and feet of Mark Bradbury, who slept through much of the destruction to his own body. "No specific cause was found and identified" for the blaze(4).

One begins to think that a physician or aide, interested in cyclical events, might have made a mental notation to be on the lookout for more baffling burns come October (six months away). What he would have found next was not a half-year interim, but a six-month old victim!

The Birmingham Evening Mail (26 Aug, 1974) notes that Lisa Tipton died in a fire limited to one room of her parents' house in Highfields, Staffordshire. Despite a strained attempt, no cause for the fire that singled out the young child for its havoc was identified.(3).

The next seasonal cycle of Birmingham's baffling blazes burst forth a month ahead of schedule, just barely making the advent of Spring...

Sunday Mercury: 23 March 1975: William Cashmore, 82, dies the previous day in his home at Autumn Close, High Heath, Walsall, just north of Birmingham. (One muses at the paradox of Fate, where the beginning of Spring brought combustion to Autumn Close!) All appliances were in working order, said the investigators. What they couldn't say was how the fire began, and why it limited itself to burning Cashmore's clothing and one chair. To those who might yet reject SHC as being real (a dubious word to Forteans, but we don't know what else to substitute), choosing to claim an external fire from cigarettes or matches is first necessary, put this in your mental pipe and smoke it: "he was a non-smoker"(5).

We look for the unconventional.

Unless our data is incomplete, and well it might be (though we have neither selected nor solicited evidence to fit a pattern), we find a roughly semi-annual periodicity of inexplicable (at the least, unusual) fires around Birmingham, England, during the last few years.

This observation leads one to speculate that the weird outbreaks of flames are related. If so, how? What force would focus on this city to unite 8 people in a personal yet strangely shared holocaust?

LINES OF FORCE AND POINTS OF POWER.

A few years ago, while experiencing contact with a higher level of awareness, we encountered the phrase "lines of force". In that moment so many things that had heretofore eluded our grasp now came together. As with a briefly lit room, it would take years, maybe decades, to explore that unexpected revelation. That night was the beginning of a new journey for us; we'd like to share part of that trip's results here...

We began looking for support... or non-support, if the other wasn't forthcoming...for the concept that lines of force traverse the universe and, consequently, the Earth, to create zones of particular energy patterns conducive to various groups of manifestations and phenomena. An original idea, we thought.

Alas, our thinking was wrong (Whose is always correct?)

In the American Southwest 'footpaths' extended for miles in straight lines over hills and across valleys, and seem to have lead nowhere. The Nazca Plain in Peru hosts lines so straight that a modern-day surveyor emeritus with laser beams would be hard-pressed to duplicate them. Great Britain as every reader of FT must know, is blanketed with alignments noted by Watkins (6) and Michell (7) and others.

(We suggest that 30 June 1921, the day when Watkins sensed the ley system from the Bredwardine Hills, will become an international holiday when its significance is more fully appreciated. But we digress into a New Age science...)

Despite opposition and denials from the Establishment, belief in and evidence for a grid of unseen energy transmission continues to grow. But to some, the 'invisible' is removed from a mathematical exercise with cartography and, instead, is witnessed during clairvoyant transcendance. Alice Cooke

speaks of seeing the luminous "Trackway" at several megalithic sites(8). Mrs Paul Screeton 'saw' a "streak of white light" later identified with a ley alignment(9). This ability for remote viewing, discomforting though it may be to some, is an ability now scientifically documented (10).

Ah, the progress since the days of Charles Fort...

Charges that Britain is subjected to some kind of mass hysteria that causes people to see lines through everything, are weakened when one encounters the same reports from cultures and geographies far removed. For instance, Carlos Castaneda, studying for years with the Mexican sorcerer Don Juan, was told to "stop the world" on 14 April 1962 and look across a valley at a mountain range. It was the typical desert landscape of Northern Mexico, thought Castaneda, until "flourescent white lines flashed into his vision and across the terrain. Said Castaneda, profoundly moved, "I could see the whole range of mountains as an intricate array of light fibers."(11).

Differing only in its location and arrangement, this was otherwise the same revelation of the radiant web of the world that Watkins had grasped more than 3 decades earlier.

On less clear-cut similarities, intra- and interdisciplinary studies (like Comparative Religion, for example) have become scholastically respectable...

Apart from seeing linear luminosity upon the landscape, there is evidence of a different sort found in the literature. That ley lines are not determined by mere architectural happenchance but chart transmissions of some energy is confirmed both indirectly... else, why should geometrical alignments pulse with flourescent radiance seen by Watkins and others? ...and directly.

John G Williams (7), Desmond Leslie (12), the author, and others have reported inexplicable columns of light appearing on film exposed at certain megalithic sites. The noted explorer Dr David D Zink told us about a diver's photograph taken off Bimini Island that shows "a column from whose base a beam of energy flares 15 degrees each side of the vertical. This energy was...invisible to the naked eye". Afterwards the diver experienced abnormal ailments (13).

Screeton goes so far as to propose, not without foundation, that certain stones "acted as 'boosters' in some way"(9) Boosters for what? Energy, it would seem. Our only disagreement with Screeton here is his use of the past tense, for it seems several sites still channel and discharge unexpected forces. We will dispense with enumerating support for this statement, on the belief that the reader has already encountered the necessary facts (Cf. 2,14,27).

Surely the immense undertaking of establishing straight lines over hill-and-dale, of siting buildings and indefensible earthworks upon or within angles formed by 'invisible' trackways, and the repeated discovery of altered streams, man-made ponds and holy wells in alignment, not to mention the logistics of constructing artificial islands having minimal military value, would lead one to conclude...even were there no substantiation from individuals' transcendant awareness...that much more than mere faith was at work here. Our ancestors must have been dealing with forces and principles as real to them as electricity and gasoline are to a Londoner today.

Additionally, since people are still seeing the luminous grid and being shocked by its discharge through standing stones (16), one concludes that, not withstanding Science's ignorance, leys (or something similarly mysterious) must yet be affecting life on the surface of the Earth.

How?

One can postulate four theories about the nature of ley energy: 1) there is none; 2) it is a known force, such as electromagnetism or aqueous currents, designated and manipulated by natural objects; 3) it is etheric in form, exceeding the boundaries of current physics; 4) it is a combination of the last two. Again without going into several columns of published comment, we assert the first theory can be discounted, and permit the reader to select his preference among the remainder (Cf.17).

Each of those postulates

prompts another question: How far out does their influence extend? Again, there is disagreement (perhaps, instead, only various aspects of an ungrasped truth). We note by use of an analogy, though, that if one stands beneath the current-carrying cables of high-voltage electrical lines and holds a flourescent lamp, the electric field radiating from 30 meters overhead is quite capable of lighting the lamp. Says one American scientist about the dangers of close proximity to high-voltage cables: "The point at which a light bulb in your hand is turned on is the point at which you are too close". We wonder what sort of manifestations provide a warning about ley proximity: "The point at which a living organism is combusted is the point at which you are too close"? Hmm...

One must also ask whether leys are planar, and relegated to the surface of the Earth. Might not a blind spring, for example, have a third dimension...penetration... that allows it to enter deep into the planet or, indeed, into the heavens to withdraw or impart and mix with the energies beyond the first few feet of the terrestrial surface? That is, blind springs and other ley-like phenomena can become, in essence, zones of vortex energy.

Vortices are known to produce weird and unexpected effects on humans (18); a regularised magnetic field flows toward a centre(7); gravity can possibly be focused at such points (Cf 19). Physiological processes are altered in these regions. One's emotions will change as well in such a field and as we show in ABLAZE!, one's mental attitude is linked both to the performance of one's physiology and the geographic environment in which one resides, and to one's physical transition...of which SHC is one mode.

Thus while many have seen or felt these lines of force, their points of power and the accompanying "zone phenomena" (as Fort called it), we believe we are the first to propose...though our limited awareness may be misleading ...that lines of force are a contributing factor in the production of another little-understood force: SHC. Let us proceed...

GRASPING FOR THE SECRETS OF THE UNTOUCHABLE.

Was Mr Cashmore's death by localised fire in Birmingham in late March 1975 an early prelude to another semi-annual cycle of mysterious fires, as indicated by the 2 previous years? Or is the information incomplete, thereby leading one to postulate a periodicity when in fact abnormal fires occur all year long in this Midlands city of 1,115,000 people?

Arguments could defend either view at this moment. As all honorable scientists do, however, we shall limit ourselves to theories based on the available data, subject of course to alteration when additional facts indicate such is necessary. The conclusion at this stage of research indicates a 6-month periodicity for bizarre blazes in Birmingham.

This regularity, though, would result from what?

Possibly it is due to variations in the relationships between the heavenly bodies and Earth's biosphere. After all, it's known that the strength and direction of this planet's magnetic current "varies according to certain phases of the Sun and Moon"(7). Severe perturbations in the geomagnetic flux have a correlation with Fortean phenomena in general (22), and SHC specifically (23). Additional unpublished work with astrology (or, if one must remain respectable, astrogeobiodynamics) supports an interaction between the planets of this solar system and fiery combustions on Earth.

Woe to those who insist that everything is isolated unto itself. (Fort's Organic Universe of Oneness shall one day triumph in the minds of men...for it already Is.)

Dowsers also find a plethora of fluctuations in energies of the Earth Spirit that elude Orthodoxy (24), with Underwood cataloguing a horde of "water line spirals", "geospirals", etc., that varied with astronomical positions (17).

Amid all this jargon, we hesitate to complicate matters or offend personal preferences by lumping all this into the Ley concept. Watkins' use of "ley" has been generally adopted to refer to the Earth's surface energy grid. As

hinted earlier, however, we see a network not limited to one level but functioning on innumerable planes both above and below so-called Terra Firma.

To facilitate matters and to differentiate between the various aspects in the line-of-force concept, we digress to propose the following etymology: that telleynes (telluric ley lines of force) define surface and subterranean enegy flows, while aerleynes (aerial ley lines of force) define atmospheric energy transmission paths.

Armed with a new vocabulary, we return to our examination of fluctuation in the Earth Spirit and learn that telleynes vary in polarity as well as strength (17, 9); geography is again involved (17). Folklore and clairvoyance (20) also support the assertion that the global energy grid and particularly power points fluctuate, in response not only to cosmic influences but cycles within the planet itself.

Therefore, an interconnection is found between astronomy, celestial mechanics, geography, and telleynes and aerleynes. It would seem the lines of force, or the angles formed by the ley grid around Birmingham, are activated...as far as pyrophenomena are concerned ...by forces focused upon telluric powers within, during the planet's revolution about the Sun.

The skeptic at this point would argue, "Well if this is so, then Birmingham should have been having weird fires every six months for decades, even centuries. Surely this would have been noted! Since I've seen nothing in print about it, therefore it can't exist and the whole contention is without foundation!"

Let us assure the reader, as the (New York) Sun did with Virginia when she asked about a Santa Claus, that just because denial is stated by someone doesn't establish the non-existence of the phenomenon. SHC itself is a pertinent case in point: we could fill an issue of FT with quotes denying its occurence...but they won't explain away the many photographs we have that speak differently. Many things go unnoticed, as Forteans already know; a collective ignorance, if you will. Apples fell for millenia, but until Newton postulated the force behind the event, gravity was unknown. A city's fire department, responding to calls every day of the year, might easily miss the significance associated with a small number of scattered blazes. It wouldn't be the first time that important discoveries have been obscured by a deluge of data...

Yet in the attempt to locate the causative force(s) behind pyrophenomena in a ley-like system, our hypothetical skeptic raises a valid point. Maybe Birmingham shouldn't be expected to have a semi-annual outbreak of enigmatic blazes stretching back into the mists of remembrance. The relocation of megalithic sites occured when the "magic had gone out of the place", say legends; Michell quotes no less (or more) a sage than Plutarch on the "cyclical" alterations of "the powers that are associated with the earth"(25). Therefore, the city of Birmingham may have been largely free of mysterious fires until the 7th decade of the 20th century, when a telluric point of a combustible nature either changed its geographic domain or increased the power of its flow to plague the industrial centre with an unsuspected and previously unencountered assemblage of unusual and inexplicable blazes.

A telluric point of a combustible nature, did he say?

INSIGHTS INTO TELLEYNE COMBUSTIONS

Alfred Watkins' son, Allen, believed the 4 Classic Elements played a role in the planet's life-flow: earth, air, water, and fire The ley system is filled with documented accounts of healings, trascendant awareness, levitation, uncanny phenomena, ominous sensations, fires...

Fires?

Yes. There are hints, curious ones (14); observations, fortunately recorded, about melted stones at megalithic sites (26) (we recall the vitrified stones at Castle Urquhart at Loch Ness, where the curator told us that archaeologists said camp fires fused the rocks together, but then were unable to duplicate the feat!); symbology, occult but decipherable facts (9), apparently ignored.

We reflect on Watkins' interest in Beacon points and beacon fires: he saw them as a means for surveying the megalithic alignments (6). Is this the only possibility, though? In the New English Dictionary one finds an archaic meaning leye: to be "flame or fire". Watkins, noting the abundance of "Brent" place-names, remarked that this was an old form of the word 'burnt'. But instead of accepting Watkins' conclusion(6) that all these references to burns and fires meant simply that beacon fires were "reflected in water", we propose the obvious: that many if not all such places were (or are) capable of generating etheric flames which, under certain conditions, become visible to the normal ocular range and a source for kindling whatever combustible matial is upon the site (8). Maybe this is why the ancient Celts conducted fire festivals on major alignments (like the one through Stonehenge)...

One example outside of Great Britain might be of interest. Mystery Hill, in New Hampshire, resembles many Old World megalithic sites. It's said by the NEARA to be an astronomical observatory similar to Stonehenge (27). But there are problems with this theory. During a recent visit we learned that the Jonathan Pattee family once lived within the site, but their house burned down in 1855. We asked how it ignited. Carelessness? Lightning? Something less conventional? No one at NEARA could tell us. Then we chanced upon a retired Air Force colonel... a materialised library angel, we suspect...who 'just' happened to decide to show us a Sectional Aeronautical Chart of New England, upon which he had marked a series of ancient sites and connected them with straight lines. Before our eyes lay linear patterns of Neolithic stoneworks, much as Watkins had seen so many years before ...only this time they stretched across eastern New England! It's a sensation we suspect few ley hunters have experienced...

I and my research assistant tuned into the same thought simultaneously: did this stone-ringed complex attract etheric flames, just as metal rods attract lightning, and did physical objects sometimes get burned in the process?

Bizarre? Then read the passage in Screeton (9) that tells of the fires that haunted a farmer who had the audacity to deface an ancient rath! Like so many individuals who debased the sanctity of Tutankhamun's burial chambers and died shortly afterwards, it seems that powerful megalithic sites carry a curse all their own, still intact and ready to unleash its fiery vengeance upon one whose reverence is amiss (21).

The evidence, some presented above and much that has been held in abeyance (for sake of brevity), strongly suggests a connection between combustion and ley centres. It is not merely an allegorical or spiritual fire, as many writers have correctly stated before, but a literal kindling of the objects mankind relegates to the physical world.

Upon this background we have proposed that Birmingham was exposed in the early 1970s to an anomalous concentration or discharge of telluric energy, whose 6-month wave length resulted in a series of perplexing and unsolved human combustions.

But the mysteries that haunt Birmingham are far from unique, and Birmingham likewise is not alone in its terrer...

Larry E Arnold, 1977

Continued Next Issue.

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'As phenomenalists, we accept everything; we believe nothing absolutely; we do not explain.'

Robert J. M. Rickard and John Michell

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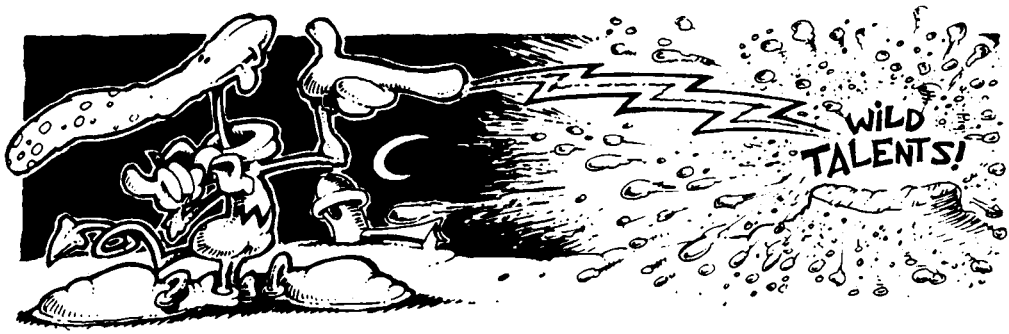


THE FLYING NUN

It was with great interest that we read the story, in the Sunday People 15 May 1977, about the invisible assailants, phantom persecutors and demonic doings that surround the tormented nun, identified only as 'Sister Rosa'. In her presence objects in the room rise up and fly around her - at other times it is she herself who is levitated. This, it is claimed, happened at least once witnessed by her terrified sisters, who saw her float slowly toward the ceiling and then pass through it! The Auxiliary Bishop of Rome, Monsignor Remigio Ragonese, told Paul House (the People reporter): 'It's amazing but true. The Sisters are highly educated and not the sort to imagine things. They told me about Sister Rosa floating through the ceiling. They found her standing on the floor above.'

The Mother Superior, of the Canesian convent in Rome, where Sister Rosa first became afflicted, called in Rome's top exorcist, Padre Candido, but, said Bishop Ragonese: 'The evil still prevailed.' She was sent to 3 different exorcists in different parts of Italy, and returned apparently healed. But some time later the persecution took up again - this time she was sent to 2 'powerful exorcists' in Padova, near Venice. One of them, German-born Padre Leone Haberstroch, later vowed never to perform another because he had become so frightened that next time the Devil might kill him.

The other priest, Don Franco Bartolomiello, told House of some of the phenomena that occurred while Sister Rosa stayed in the convent next to his church. The nuns themselves began to be plagued by mysterious happenings. Once, on hearing screams from Sister Rosa's cell, they rushed in to find her tearing at her cowl. When they removed it they found thorns from a cactus plant in their garden firmly embedded in her scalp. They resisted all attempts to removed them until they were washed with Holy water, we are told. An iron bar, from the back of a door, detatched itself and travelled through walls to materialize in Sister Rosa's cell, and began beating her while she slept. On another occasion kitchen knives flew off a table, appearing in her room, trying to stab her in the chest. Don Franco said that while he was performing the exorcism, a piece of string rose out of his pocket and twisted itself round her neck as if to strangle her.

The tone of the piece, and the atitude of the Church, is geared to interpreting the phenomena as Diabolic. Although it is not apparent in the brief descriptions of the phenomena above, we are told the nun is 'possessed by the devil.' Describing other occasions, Don Franco said she had to be restrained by 5 nuns from attacking the cross and the altar, spoke obscenities and used a gutteral 'animal-like' voice.

It is in cases like this that we see possible relationships between poltergeist phenomena and chronic hysteria. We note that the thorns could have been a literal attempt to recreate Christ's 'Crown of Thorns', and the knife-attack Christ's 'ferita' or chest-wound. In this case the use of physical objects to reproduce the Stigmata is quite novel, and, in our knowledge, unique - usually some kind of psychosomatic process forms Christ's wounds directly in the stigmatic's body tissues. The beatings and persecutions, like the Stigmata, are often stimulated by an obsessive meditation on the sufferings of Christ, and it is the vowed intention of many Religious to personally identify with the Christ-image, to share the pain and lighten Christ's burden a little. Let me also say that in using the term 'hysteria' I am not explaining-away the condition. True clinical chronic hysteria is a very real state in which the psychosomatic processes take a real, if almost magical, part, and is still largely mysterious.

Levitations, apports of objects, and even demonic persecutions, have taken place in the lives of saints, as well as the lives of many who were not so pious.

but more clearly seriously disturbed people. That is why the Church deliberately, and wisely, makes the beatification process long, complex and thorough. Only if the phenomenon has as its object the bringing of people to Christ, will they acknowledge its authenticity - everything else is the devil's duplicity. This opis their priviledge, and underlies a sound observation on the distinction between divine and demonic phenomena (we can't go into that here). But what interests us, is that a very similar case in 1661 occured in the witchcraft context, and another in 1850 was seen as the product of a poltergeist - both involved levitations and teleportations of the main 'victim' and other phenomena, but outside of any Roman Catholic imagery or connotations. The common denominator seems to us to be spontaneous manifestations of forces that under other, and more trivial,circumstances can even be deliberately controlled (eg spoon-bending).

We are trying to get more information on Sister Rosa, and would appreciate any help in the matter. (Cr: P Screeton).

HIGH RISE MEDITATORS

In my article on some non-Christian levitations (last issue) I briefly mentioned a case brought to me, even as I was typing up the piece, by a library angel (FT21/24 ref22). It was an announcement in the London Evening News 16 May 1977, to the effect that 12 fairly ordinary people had just graduated from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's first six-month course in levitation, at his university at Lucerne, Switzerland. One woman, Mrs Albertine Haupt said: 'I suddenly found myself 6ft above the floor and thought "Heavens, I've done it."' She had difficulty landing. 'Fortunately the floor was covered with foam rubber. But we all have bruises. It is just a matter of learning to control the power.'

These 12 have trained to teach the technique to others, they say, and declined to publicly demonstrate their talent. The announcement brought the expected challenge from the professional 'magicians'. Illusionist David Berglas offered £2,000 to any of them who could hover 6" or more above the ground. If five of them could do it, he was prepared to part with £10,000. London Evening News 18 May 1977. They, in turn, said that when they got his challenge in writing, they'd try to get MMY's permission.

The story got a big spread in the Daily Mirror 14 July 1977 (Cr: Robert Forrest), in which reporter Michael Hellicar spoke to MMY in person, and was refused a demonstration. 'We will not turn this into a circus,' one henchman said. However, having barred photographer Peter Stone from taking a picture, the guru's men gave him one taken only 2 days before, they said, (see Mirror), allegedly of disciples levitating, and Hellicar was allowed to interview those in the picture. But so far there's no sign they'll accept Berglas' challenge. I don't think they ever will.

LEVITATION TRICKS

Again, in my levitation article, I asked if it was possible for the levitating fakirs of the early 19th century (and probably before) to use a mechanical structure. Both Doc Shiels and Heathcote Williams wrote to say 'Yes!', enclosing xeroxes of different kinds of magician's apparatus to achieve different effects, including the balancing on swords effect, involving large baseplates, specially reinforced supports concealed in brooms, swords etc, harnesses and hidden assistants. OK...the next part of the question is, is it feasible that wandering fakirs had such sophisticated equipment at their disposal,bearing in mind their limited resources and lack of modern materials and manufacturing processes? And still, I ask, how was it possible for them to conceal inevitably heavy equipment about their persons - and how could they perform the trick - if it was a trick - out in the open (when all the props I've seen required a stationary audience and a prepared stage?

LEVITATION...AND INVISIBILITY TOO?

Our wandering correspondent, Ion Will, sent us a clipping from the 'Spectrum' column of the Malaysian New Sunday Times 3 July 1977, which relayed the claims of British author and poet, Richard Church, that: 'From the age of 10 I had this strange power to rise 6 or 7ft from the ground and fly through the air like an owl. It was always happening to me. Whenever I got excited or put out by anything I would rise above my difficulties and soar through the air.' Once, he says, he flew to Victoria Station. 'I must be invisible when I'm flying because even when I used to float down the stairs during my time in the Civil Service at Billingsgate, no one ever saw me.' Mr Church says he gave it up when he was 29. We wonder, from his choice of simile, 'like an owl', whether he lives in Cornwall, haunted by the Owlman (see FT16 & 17). Please yourselves on this one!

This piece by John Michell is not from our book, Phenomena (see p12) but is in the same mood, and meant as a foretaste.

Literary coincidences

by JOHN MICHELL

In the first volume of The Gulag Archepelago, Solzhenitzin relates this anecdote about his fellow prisoner at the Dmitrovsk Prison, the astronomer, Kozayev. To keep sane in his solitary cell Kozayev had been working out in his head a new system of physics, but at a certain stage technical information was required without which he could go no further. He was wildly excited by his discoveries and desperate at being frustrated. In his situation there seemed no chance of getting the information. The prison library, which contained only works like Red Army novels and party texts, provided each prisoner with a book, exchanged every ten days. You took what you were given. Kozayev prayed for help with the intensity of a lonely, obsessed man. Half an hour later they came to change the books. The volume they gave him was The Theory of Astro-physics - the very book he needed. Somehow he knew that the miracle was only a temporary one, and he threw himself on the book, memorizing all the relevant passages and tables. It took him two days - and at the end of that time an inspector visited his cell, noticed the book and immediately confiscated it.

An odd story - almost incredible. Perhaps these foreigners are given to exaggerations. But here is Colin Wilson, a straight forward native, claiming, in the introduction to his book The Occult, to have been helped substantially in researching for it by repeated interventions of coincidences.

'On one occasion, when I was searching for a piece of information, a book literally fell off the shelf and fell open at the right page.'

This is really going a bit far; and unlike Kozayev, Wilson did not even pray to God for the information. There are devout prayers and intense desires - and somewhere, as Fort would say, there is a merging between them - to the same effect.

As The Occult proceeds, it attracts more and more coincidences of the same sort - nothing quite so dramatic as the poltergeist book, but just as beneficial. Wilson begins to wonder what is happening. He notes that 'items of required information have turned up with a promtitude that makes me feel nervous.' However, like a sensible fellow he decides to ride his luck. Self-confidence returns...and expands.

'After a while I got used to this, and even began to feel a mild resentment when some piece of information evaded me for ten minutes or so.'

If there are people seriously engaged in literary research who have not profited from the unreasonable coincidences that Koestler attributes to 'library angels', I have not yet met them. All experienced writers recognize the phenomenon and will privately give examples from their own experience. Heathcote Williams , when asked about the effect, immediately volunteered an experience of the day before, when he was writing a story in which - as I remember it - a naked Jamaican Rastafarian roves London inspired by a mad scheme to release Guy, the Zoo gorilla, and overwhelm the city with an orgiastic wave of liberation. It seemed to Heathcote to be of stunning relevance when, with the story going well

and the idea hot in his mind, he idly pulled a book from the shelf, opened it and read:

' His disciples said: "When wilt thou be revealed to us and when shall we see Thee?" Jesus said: "When you take off your clothing without being ashamed, and take your clothes and put them under your feet as the little children and tread on them, then shall you behold the Son of the Living One and you shall not fear."'

The book was Joseph Campbell's Masks of God, and the words came from the gnostic Gospel of Thomas. The passage was immediately incorporated into Heathcote's story, and throughout that evening similar coincidences kept turning up - words glanced at in books or newspapers seeming to echo or anticipate his train of thought.

Here is another example, recorded by that weird genius, August Strindberg, in his masterpiece, Inferno; a book which describes the abandonment of his marriage, his descent from fame and fortune into a life of poverty and solitude as an alchemist, and the dream-like coincidence-ridden state of mind to which it led. *At that time the composition of sulfur was unknown. Strindberg* had discovered that it contained carbon, and *suspected that two other elements were* involved. Walking down the Boulevade Saint-Michel, he picked up at random a book from a dealer's stall. It turned out to be a treatise on chemistry by the old Swedish chemist, Orfila. The sentence at which he opened it read: 'Sulfur has been classified among the elements. The ingenious experiments of H. Davy and the younger Berthollet tend to prove that it contains hydrogen, oxygen, and a certain base which it has proved impossible to isolate so far.'

By this miracle, as it appeared to him, Strindberg was thrown into ecstasy. The information that sulfur contains hydrogen and oxygen was the answer to the question that was then totally occupying his mind. He had already identified the third element, so at one stroke his work was completed (for his proof, see L'Hyperchemie, Paris 1897).

A remarkable sequence of events followed. Shortly after his revelation through the Orfila book, Strindberg was strolling in the Montparnasse cemetery when a fine tombstone, ornamented with the white marble features of an aged seer, caught his attention. It was the tomb of Orfila. Some days later he was attracted by a cloister-like building in the Rue d'Assas - the Hotel Orfila.

With feelings of guidance, Strindberg took a room in the Orfila. Its window looked out onto a wall in which were other little windows, reminding him of a monastery. They were, however, windows of water-closets, the sound of whose flushings destroyed his peace of mind and brought him to realize that he had fallen into the state described by Swedenborg as the 'excrementitious hell'.

The act of writing seems to attract whatever it is you are writing about. David Solomon , the writer and anthologist, was working on an anthology on the theme of shit* I was sorry, but not surprised, when he was arrested on a charge that the police consider so serious, that, at the time of writing, he is held in Bristol prison, no bail allowed. The excrementitious hell again! A happier illustration is the case of Kathleen Raine, the illuminated biographer of William Blake, who wrote a book on the English Platonist, Thomas Taylor. She became very intimate with Taylor and the society in which he moved at the very beginning of the 19th century. Like any conscientious writer, she became obsessed with her subject. Her son had recently married, and his wife was producing children. Judge, as *they say, Kathleen Raine's astonished* delight *when she learned that her daughter-in-law was a direct descendant of* the man who was then occupying her thoughts - and that her grandchildren were therefore of the lineage of the very same Thomas Taylor, the subject of her book!

To pile up anecdotes of literary coincidences - or any other sort - is easy enough. To comment helpfully is less so. The phenomenon is of intense desire spontaneously answered. If one becomes aware of the effect, and if, like Colin Wilson and many other writers, one experiences the possibility of invoking it, the normal sane reaction is to continue quietly taking advantage of it, rather than force it upon the attention of sceptics with their irritating, unpractical questions about whether one has counted the number of times a desire for information has not been answered. The effect is too subtle and personal, and the necessary state of mind too elusive to bear statistical analysis. For investigating the vast area of the irrational in human nature and in the world at large, Fort advised substituting observation for explanation. His books are full of records of desires, both in men and nature, answered spon-

* Extracted in The Fanatic 5 - A Paper of Passion - only £1.00, from the Open Head Press: BCM Open Head, London WC1.

taneously - and sometimes excessively or abortively: the prayers for rain followed by devastating floods, gluts of animals or insects after dearths, ponds newly dug which are soon found to have developed a fish population, and fish showering from the sky and missing all the ponds to fall on dry land.

To fit his observations, Fort suggested that the whole of nature is one organism and that, like any other live body, it acts unconsciously and automatically to satisfy its own needs. He referred to the universe as the great hermaphrodite with sterility as its ultimate principle. 'Perhaps that is why people see visions of blond hermaphrodites.'

A fascinating aspect of Fort's way of seeing things is the extent to which it repeats the views of ancient philosophers, such as the humourous Taoist sages and the mystical neo-Platonists. These schools reflected the magical science of their time and its dicta: 'As above, so below,' and 'Like attracts like.' Plotinus, in the 3rd century AD, stated the basic theory of magic: 'To attract anything in nature, make a recepticle designed to receive it.' On this principle the pond designed to receive fish will somehow attract them, and the scholar's desire for information will automatically produce the appropriate response. Magical invocation acts in the same way through the science of correspondences, based on the same idea as Fort's, that as nature acts spontaneously to satisfy her own needs, she will also act in response to needs artificially implanted in her. Thus rainmaking magicians act out their desire for rain and perform other ceremonies to attract lightning, or to make the crops grow. Colin Wilson is stuck for a particular reference - the environment is charged with his desire for it - and the appropriate book springs open from the shelf.

Speaking about Wilson; in one of his novels, The Philosopher's Stone, he refers to the negative side of the creative coincidence effect - an opposite force which becomes active whenever a person starts to benefit from nature's revelations. John Keel, in Operation Trojan Horse, has a chapter on the same process, by which UFO prophets and contactees are first led on by true information to make inspired statements and predictions, and then disastrously let down by some grandiose but false message about an approaching millenium or whatever. History abounds in such cases, illustrating how a series of revelations may well lead one into the excrementitious hell experienced by Strindberg.

Some years ago, while keeping a coincidence diary, I noticed several examples of this process, in which an intense, successful period of work, punctuated by helpful coincidences, is suddenly brought to an end by a series of disagreeable, unexpected interruptions. On more than one occasion the same obsessed state of mind which attracts literary coincidences also attracted the same tiresome, frivolous visitor; a person who at other times might have been agreeable company, but who only manifested himself at the very moments when his presence was most disruptive. On one occasion I noted in the diary that I was then in the state of creative excitement to which he always responds - and the next day I had a card from him: 'I have been thinking about you lately, and will call...'

There is a name for this sort of thing - the 'Man from Porlock' effect, after the famous flow-breaker who interrupted Coleridge's Kubla Khan. No wonder the ancients regarded Hermes, god of revelation, as perfectly two-faced, and identified him with the will-o-the-wisp which leads its followers either to a treasure or into deep bogs.

Experience shows that all coincidences, intuitions, voices, angelic communications and so on should be treated with respect, but never to the point of becoming reliant upon them. There is a balance in nature whose effects may be like those of a cruel or infantile sense of humour which delights in deflating the earnestly credulous. Again, it may act in a most pleasing manner, as in the following literary coincidence recorded in Flammarion's The Unknown 1902.

Flammarion was sitting at his desk working on a chapter about the force of the wind for his book, The Atmosphere. All of a sudden the force he was writing about intruded upon him, and a 'minature whirlwind' carried his papers out of the window beyond hope of recovery. Yet this disaster attracted its compensation, immediately and delightfully. Some days later, Flammarion received from his publisher the proofs of his book, including the missing chapter set up in type. It turned out that the whirlwind which carried off the chapter on winds had deposited the sheets at the feet of the publisher's assistant, who gathered them up under the impression that he had dropped them, and delivered them to the office.

John Michell - July 1977.

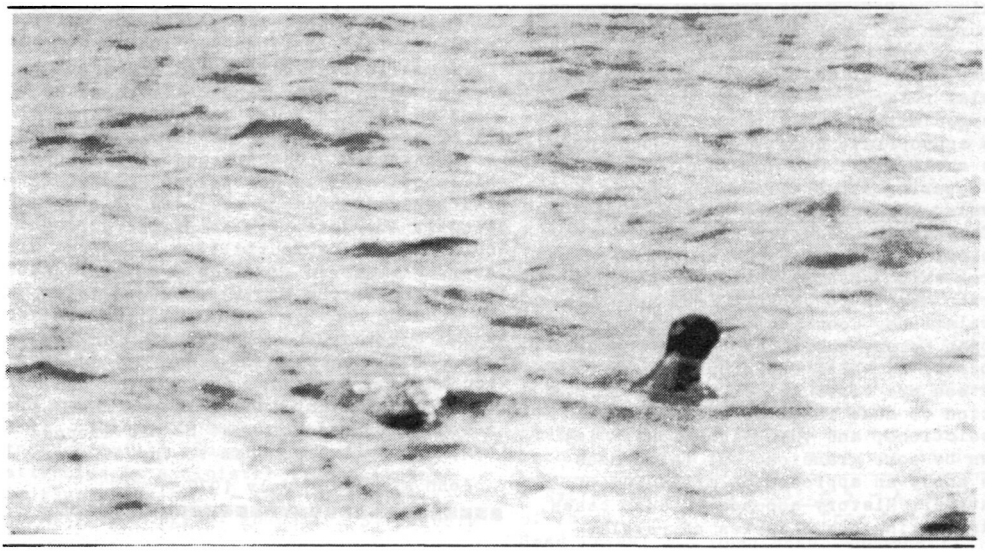
So far this year there have been a remarkable number of monster sightings on the coasts and in the lakes of the UK, and elsewhere. Here are a few of the most important recent ones, mainly photographic cases we are pleased to say - the others will be given in due course. There have been quite a few sightings in American and Canadian lakes, but lack of space forbids us doing more than referring you to the Fortean journals listed in our journal review section, for further details.

MORGAWR - THE DAVID CLARKE PHOTOS

Further to the sighting of Morgawr in the Helford estuary, near Falmouth, Cornwall, on 17 November 1976, by Doc Shiels and David Clarke, the editor of the Cornish Life magazine - see Doc's account in FT19, and David's account in FT 21), we have managed to obtain a copy of the photo (BELOW) by Mr Clarke. As those of you who have been following the story will know, David's camera malfunctioned at the critical moment. Here is his comment:

'After about 5 or 6 frames (of the Church at Mawnan Smith, etc), the film wind-on mechanism jammed and only wound on either one or two sprockets each time (though I didn't know this till later). The result was that frame 6 overlapped with most of frame 7 and part of frame 8, etc. I sent the full strip of negative to Tim Dinsdale, to see if he could 'lift' anything from it. I had previously done some enlargements myself, but was not happy with the results. However, I enclose one of the prints...so you have a 'scoop' for what it's worth!'

'The photo was taken with a telephoto lens and shows 'it' halfway across the river mouth, some 70ft away. Unfortunately, there are two sets of waves superimposed which gives the appearance that it was close by the bank. It also appears so 'seal-like'. In fact at this range it looked nothing like a seal, and this photograph was taken as the head turned away, the outline of its back visible breaking the surface. What you can see is the back of the head with



one of the two small 'buds', or rounded lumps, on the left. One of the other prints shows what appears to be an otter's head! So you can imagine my frustration. I had had a perfect close sighting and finished up with a spoiled film which apparently shows an otter and a seal.'

Nevertheless, we are pleased and grateful to be able to show you this still interesting and valuable photo. Compare it with those taken by Doc (see FT19 center pages).

MORGAWR - OTHER SIGHTINGS

From Doc Shiels' regular dispatches to FT, we have learned of other sightings, most of which never made the papers (and thus survived the scorn that passes for much of modern 'trendy' journalism). In Doc's village, Ponsanooth, Cornwall, a painter called Ray Hopley told Doc that he had seen Morgawr off Trefusis Point (Mary F country), on the 1st Feb, while he was out sketching. Apparently this also appeared on the BBC 'Spotlight SW', but treated as a great joke, simply, Doc says,'because he admitted that he knew me! As it happens, hundreds of people in Cornwall know me ...that's showbiz!' Two other undated items of gossip were: that MLA Andrews, exec. producer of BBC's 'The World About Us' told Doc his mother saw a Morgawr-like monster while sailing between Cornwall and Brittany; and Mike Truscott, of the West Briton,told Doc that he had spoken to a Falmouth policeman who had seen the monster but wished to remain anonymous. Hardly solid stuff, but a good indication of what's going on in the background down there.

Finally, Doc sent us a note, from the Falmouth Packet 27 May 1977 - that an unnamed Scotsman,on holiday at Falmouth, saw the monster on Gyllyngvase Beach. That's it! Annoyingly and typically brief! Doc points out the Fortean humour of it - that it must have happened on the 21st or 22nd May, about the same time as he was in Scotland clicking the shutter on Nessie (see below).

At the time of going to press, we hear of more Morgawrs near Plymouth - more details when we know them...

MORGAWR - GERRY BENNETT PHOTOS

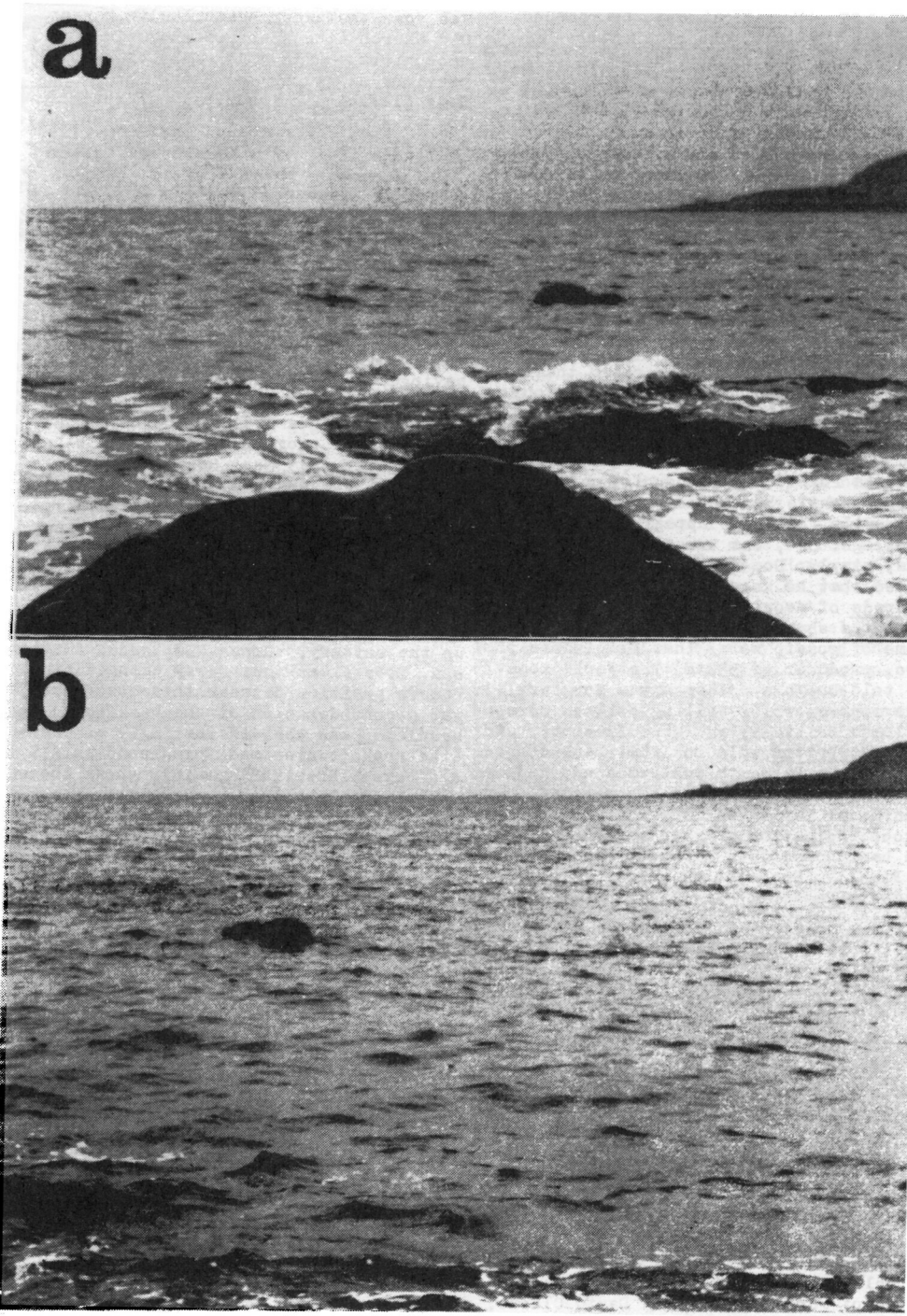
Gerry Bennett, of Seworgan, Cornwall, was down on Mawnan beach, below Mawnan Old Church (the scene of the Owlman encounters - FT16 & 17 - and of several previous sightings including Doc's and Dave Clarke's photos) early in the morning of 31 January 1977. He had seen Morgawr before - around Christmas 1975 - and this time had a camera and colour film with him. He took three pictures, of which we have only seen the two we show here - which were rephotographed in B&W (for reproduction) from Gerry's positive transparencies. - See next page.

As you will notice from the photos, there is a large double-humped back breaking the surface in the center of each picture. We print these without having heard Mr Bennett's story for ourselves yet, though he has told it to Doc Shiels, and had them shown on the BBC regional progamme 'Spotlight SW' on the evening of 9 Feb. So we make a few tentative guesses and hope to confirm (or correct) these later. Taking the direction of motion of the creature as suggested by the humps (the smaller in front, we think), and the hint of a wake (in photo 'B'), we think that they were taken in the order we show them, and that the beast was first heading up the estuary, turned and headed out to sea. It's clear that Gerry changed his camera position between these two shots, yet a consideration of the background headland, and the distractingly monster-like rock (center mid-foreground in A, and lower left in B) plainly shows the motion of the monster, even if it's change of profile hadn't. It is obviously not a rock!

Gerry describes the back as like that of a lobster or big crustacean, greenish black, with a 'kind of crusty parasitic growth' - though none of this is clear on the colour slide or the B&W enlargements. As Doc pointed out to me, the double-hump configuration, typical of Morgawr, seems to jibe with the idea of a 'hard-back', like a turtle. Gerry thinks it undulated, which, with the impression of a hard crustacean shell probably given by the parasitic growths, made him think of a segmented shell, like a lobster's tail. Again, Doc points out, if this is indeed what Gerry saw, then it is not the same type of creature that he and others have seen - Dave Clarke said of his sighting that it reminded him of a 'big black slug'! We'll give you more details when we know them. One last thought - a turtle-like hard-backed critter makes us think of the Barmouth Monster (see FT10 for references), often described in this way, and which may have moved south!

PHOTO on previous page:

An enlargement of the triple-exposed photo of Morgawr, taken by David Clarke, on Mawnan beach, 17 November 1976. Copyright: David Clarke.



The Bennett photos of Morgawr - with backgrounds roughly matched to show creature's change of direction and motion.

MORAG - HAZEL JACKSON'S PHOTO

Morag is Nessie's cousin in Loch Morar, and is annually pursued by the Loch Morar Survey (every bit as dedicated as their more famous colleagues at Loch Ness), lead by Mr Adrian Shine. By now they will be nearing the close of their programmed 1977 investigations using sonar. Undoubtedly they will be discussing two appearances of Morag that occurred (predictably) during their recent recess...

Hazel, and her husband Ray, of Wakefield, Yorks, stopped at Morar during their touring holiday (no date is given), and took a photo of their sheepdog with an Instamatic camera. Hazel says: 'We didn't see anything on the loch at the time, and it was only when we returned home and had (the film) developed that we saw what appeared to be a monster's head. It was just like one of those china monsters we bought as a souvenir. Ray and I had a good laugh and dismissed it. It was only when a customer (in their tailor shop) saw the photographs and referred to an article in the Yorkshire Post about the search for Morag. I've always been sceptical, but I believe more in them now than I did - though I would still have to see more before being convinced.' Ray Jackson said: 'I never believed in monsters. I thought it was a load of rubbish. But there is obviously something there in the photographs. Two photographs were taken and there is some distance between what appears to be the monster's head on each frame, which indicates that it moved.'

The Jacksons' healthy scepticism is refreshing - but the question raised by the object has implications they have not considered. At the scene they could see nothing out in the loch that caught their eye - yet something behaving as if it were the head of a monster breaks the surface on the film. We are faced with several intriguing possibilities: that the Jacksons, concentrating on their dog, never noticed what was in range behind it; that we have an example of the effects associated with the 'phantom' monsters (favoured by FW Holiday, and some others) that can materialize and dematerialize, quickly and mysteriously; or that some kind of 'thoughtographic' effect has taken place, by which the Jacksons have unconsciously imprinted an image ('just like one of the china monsters we had bought as a souvenir') onto the film, before it was taken back and developed. We know very little about these pictures, drawing our details from the account in the Yorkshire Post 4 September 1976 (Cr: Jeremy Beadle, AJ Bell). Any of you so inclined to investigate and find out anything are asked to let us know.

The Jackson photo of Morag (center left in photo).

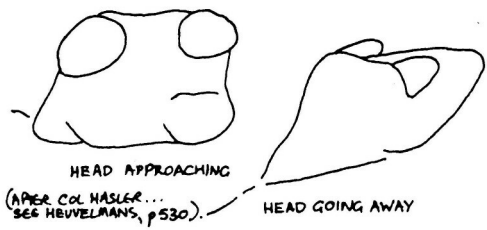
The Morag piece referred to above was in the Yorkshire Post 17 August 1976 (Cr: Anthony Bell).

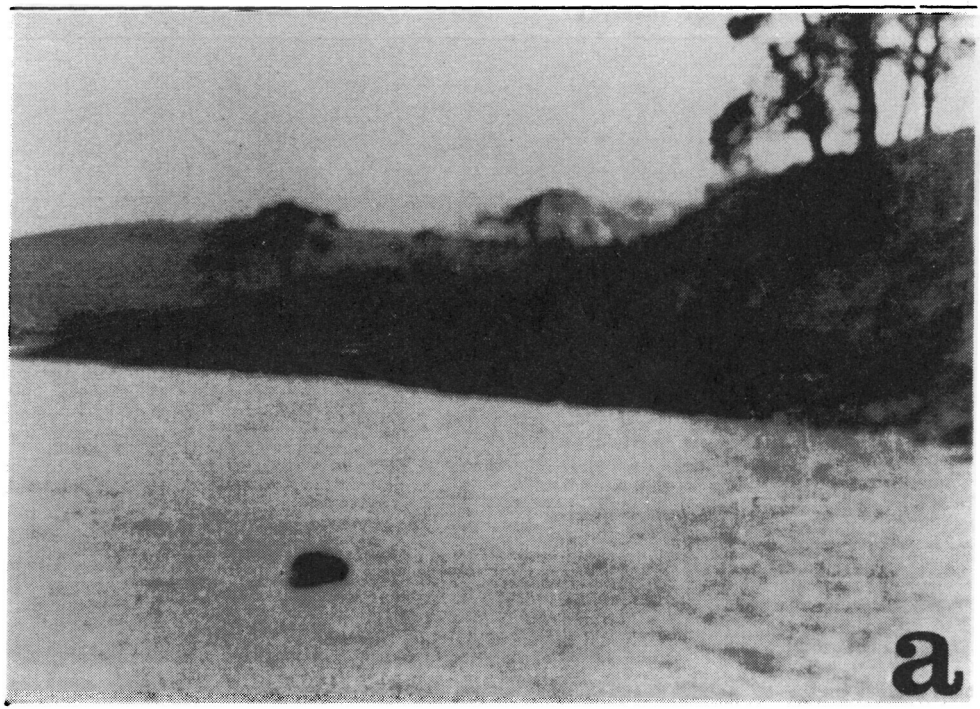
MORAG - MISS M LINDSAY'S PHOTOS

We know very little about these, obtained by one of Doc's colleagues, Pat Scott-Innes, who is at present in the USA and uncontactable. Ms Scott-Innes had followed up several stories which emerged during the 'Monstermind' experiment (see FT21/27), and obtained statments and copies of the photos, some of which filtered through to Doc. These photos were allegedly taken on Monday, 31 January 1977, of a 40ft monster in Loch Morar, by a Miss Lindsay, of Musselburgh. Doc says they have been shown on Grampian TV, and probably in the USA, and that some doubt has been cast on their authenticity. Ms Scott-Innes said in passing that 'negatives were not available', and we think it likely this means they were probably Polaroid originals re-photographed by Ms Scott-Innes (the scratches were already in the image of the prints we received, indicating a re-photographing at some stage).

Doc sent copies to David Shirt, the Scientific Officer of the Loch Morar Expedition, for examination, who thought they could have been taken from a boat, in a channel between two of the islands at the seaward end of the loch, but cannot identify the location more accurately. Mr Shirt also thought that for a 40ft monster there was very little evidence of water disturbance or a wake in the pictures, which, by the way, are of the creature's head - although in photo b there does seem to be the hint of a wake behind the head. We can understand any negative reaction to these pictures in view of the lack of additional details - and we hope that these will come to light in the near future.

Doc also told us he had the nagging feeling he had seen something like this suggested head before. My own impression was of a prominently muzzled head with bulges on either side of the front which may or may not be eyes - quite different from the small, almost spherical head in the recent Morgawr and Nessie pictures. Then Doc found what he was reminded of -





these sketches below are copied from the statement by Neil MacInnes of a monster he saw in the Sound of Jura, in the Hebrides, in 1964 (for full details see B Heuvelmans' In The Wake of the Sea-Serpents p529ff). In this latter case too there was no clear indication that the anterior-facing projection were in fact eyes.

We note two other points: the similarity with our first Morar photo (ie the pose of the head just above the surface), though of course they clearly differ in shape; and the involvement to various degrees in the latter story of two people with 'Innes' in their names!

NESSIE - DOC SHIELS' PHOTOS

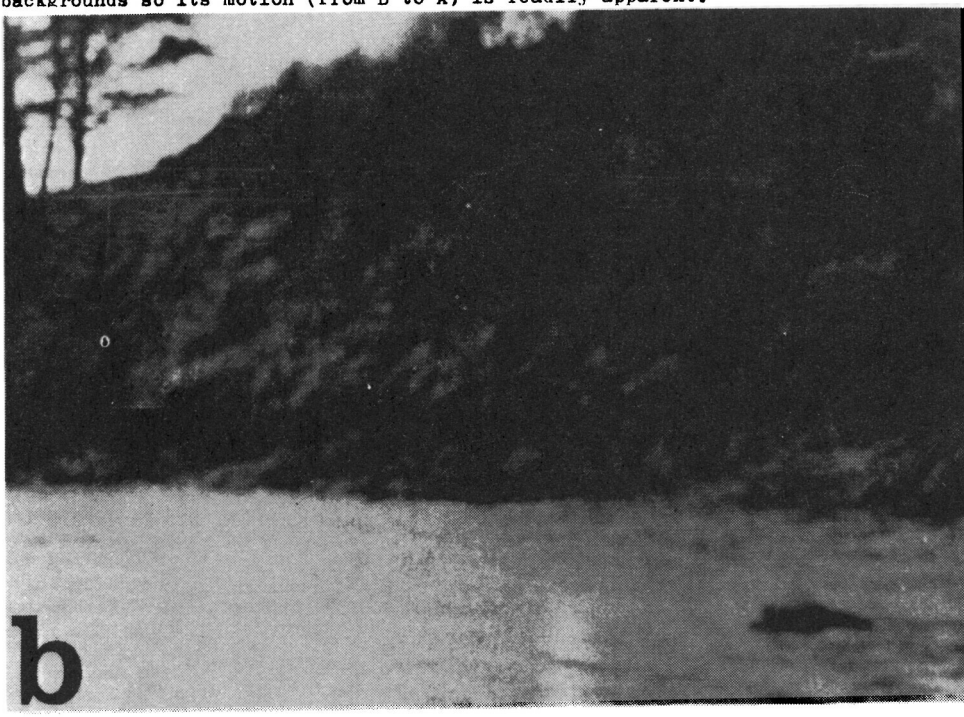
Doc spent a few days in Scotland, and despite all the warnings he'd had, about tampering with the unknown and venturing near Urquhart Castle, the weather was good and Doc was startled by the ease and number of times he saw the monster. Doc's very aware of all the criticisms you could level at that but the fact is that he went up there, saw Nessie, and took two of the best photos yet of Nessie's head and neck.

The best day was Sat. 21 May - which began with an 8am sighting of 3 black humps gliding through the mirror-surface of Borlum Bay towards Inverness, and in the company of other witnesses. Later Doc took photos of some long wakes on the opposite shore-line from below Castle Urquhart, and again outside Invermoriston. His best shots were of the head and neck which popped up suddenly below Castle Urquhart, at about 4pm that day.

Although Doc has sent us a lot of detail in his letters, I can't do better than to quote the more succinct report he gave to the Ness Information Service (see our journal reviews for details of NIS) printed in their Nessletter 22:

'The camera was a Zenith EM, 35mm SLR, with a 150mm telephoto lens. As I recall, I took the pictures at between f11 and f16 at 1/500/sec. The creature was rather less than 100yds away...the part of the neck showing above the water-line must have been around 4 or 5ft long. Don't take any notice of what appear to be eyes ((in photo A)) ...I could see no eyes as such in the original. The light patch above the mouth (if mouth it is...and I think it is) ((in A)) is merely a reflection off a kind of ridge. The colour of the animal was greenish brown, with a paler underside. Skin tex-

The Lindsay photos of a creature's head in Loch Morar - we have roughly aligned the backgrounds so its motion (from B to A) is readily apparent.

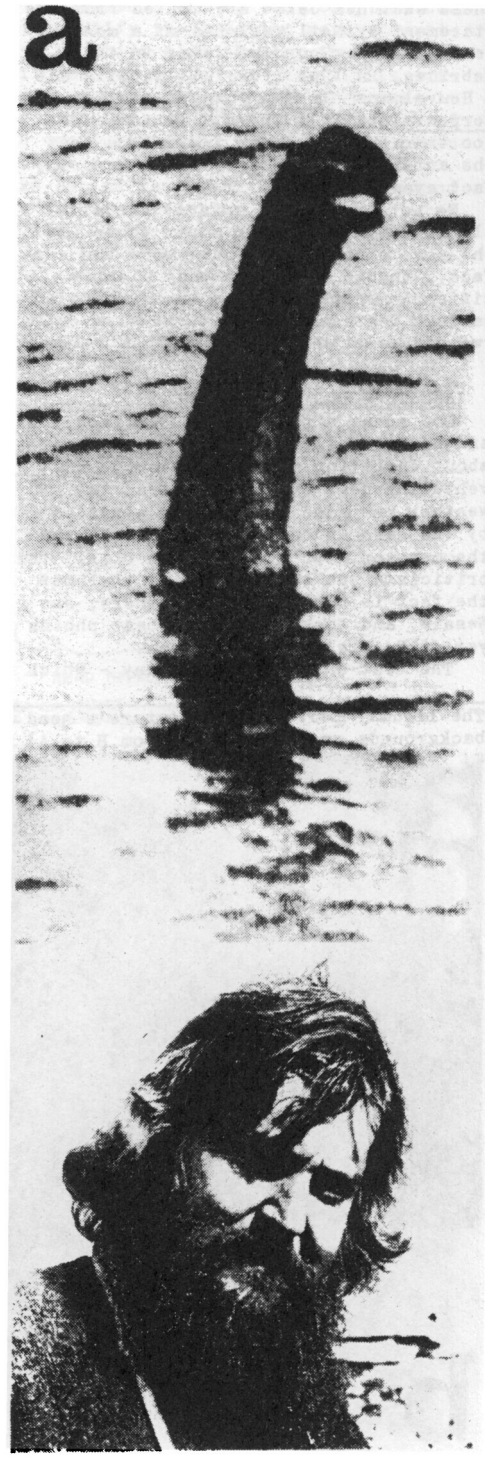


ture, smooth and glossy. The animal was visible for no more than 4 or 5 seconds. It held itself very upright, very still, except for a turning of the head and a straightening of the neck before it sank very smoothly, below the surface. It had powerful neck muscles. There is evidence, well possible evidence ((in B)) of parasitic growth at the back of the neck, on the dorsal ridge, as a pale yellow/green patch is visible near the water. Also in both pictures, a round pale object floats on the water close to the neck...I suggested to Bob Rickard this could be an empty McEwans beer can - so many of them are to be found along the lochside!!! On the other hand, it could be the same sort of round, pale, small object which appears in, for example, the Hugh Gray picture of Nessie (and several others).'

Doc's film was a high speed Ektachrome positive transparency film, and it's a real pity we can't afford to bring you these pictures in colour. We only have room to mention briefly some of the subsequent events. Doc handed the film over to David Clarke, editor of Cornish Life to develop - and rushed the best slide (A) to the Scottish Daily Record, who printed it in colour, and they wired a B&W version to the Daily Mirror - both gave it front page space on 9 June 1977. Alas, our attempts to get a copy of the Record item have proved fruitless - so if any Scottish reader has one to spare, we'd welcome it for our files.

Both of our pictures are enlargements from Doc's slides. After some heart-stopping delays, he finally received back the original from the Record; but the original of the second shot (B) was sent to Doc's colleague, Max Maven, in the USA, who immediately wrote back saying the letter arrived empty! Fortunately Doc had taken a B&W copy slide, from which our photo B was taken. This is the first time both photos have been printed together - by Charles! we've brought you some scoops lately!

Anyway - Doc and I both think there is a great similarity between these photos and the two taken by the surgeon, Wilson, in 1934 - however we disagree with the current opinion of Dr Roy Mackal (see his book The Monsters of Loch Ness, and the interview with him, by Jerome Clark, in Fate July 1977) that Wilson's photos represent a) a diving bird, and b) a partly submerged bird, distorted by tricks of the light - Doc's photos seem to show what could have happened between Wilson's two. In A, the water is fairly undisturbed, with the suggestion of a concentric ripple, but in B, the creature has turned and started to move forward



The Shiels photos of Nessie, and (left below) their candid Cornish cameraman.

and to sink. Here the water shows more evidence of being displaced. Doc's cannot be dismissed as 'diving birds' - there is too much detail, even in these relatively fuzzy enlargements. But Doc pessimistically expected them to be dismissed because of his madcap, showman image. Be that as it may, the response from the establishment to these, the most detailed pictures yet, has been one of deafening silence. But apparently Sir Peter Scott and Tim Dinsdale, who's opinions must count for something, are both favourably impressed. Tim wrote to us (7 July):

'Having corresponded with Doc extensively over the Mawgawr business ((see FT19)), having met him (once), and been aufait with the LN preambles and events leading up to the neck pictures, I am of the opinion they are genuine, and that they must represent, as a result, the most important stride forward in still photography that we have on record.'

'In Doc's experience the head and neck were manifestly alive, and its vertical submergence a noted characteristic of Monster behaviour, which demonstrates the fact that it can alter its displacement - perhaps as P.dolichodeirus did, a type of Plesiosaurus , which as Frank Buckland pointed out in the first half of last century, had such a peculiar rib structure it could probably compress the air in its lungs at will, and thus ascend or descend vertically.'

'I find these pictures of immense interest, and cannot wait to study them.'

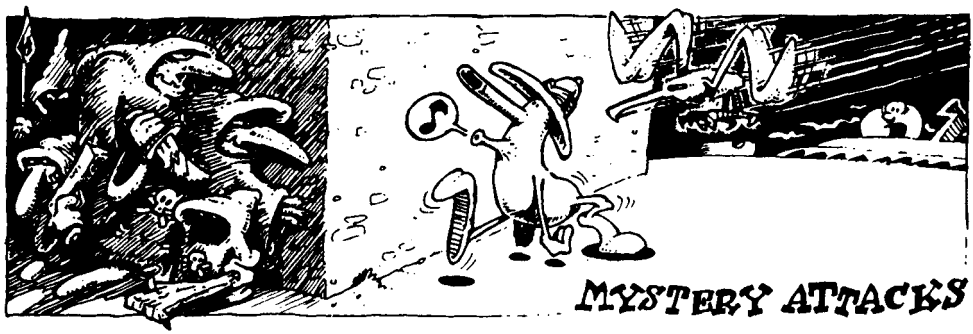
We'll bring you more on the study of these important new photos as we hear of it.

Lastly - we'd like to pass on an announcement from Doc, that having seen and photographed both Morgawr and Nessie, and accomplishing to his satisfaction what he set out to do, he formally and ritually bowed out of the 'Monster-mind' experiment on 7th July (ie 7/7/77).

A PACIFIC PLESIOSAUR?

Once more events take an exciting turn as we near our deadline. This time it's the announcement that a Japanese trawler, off Christchurch, New Zealand, found an unidentified dead animal in its nets, 'at 9,000ft'*. The 2-ton corpse resembled a plesiosaur, with long neck and strong fore-flippers prominent in the photo. It stank so much that they threw it back after taking a few photos, sketches and measurements - or so the story went. Japanese scientists were said to be fairly convinced this was an important find of an animal hitherto unknown to science - and since the discovery, in April, joined the fishing company in urging Japanese trawlermen in the general area to keep their eyes open (and presumably, noses pegged) for more! ((* another report says 900))

One later report we had said that the trawler men had after all kept a bit of one of the flippers. The photo appeared in the Daily Telegraph 21 July 1977, but was too poor for reproducing here - however we are attempting to learn more, and obtain better photos, copies of the sketches etc, and will let you have them as soon as we do. Meanwhile, the expected 'backlash' is on time. A letter from the Curator of the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland's aquarium, in Edinburgh, in the Telegraph for 26 July, says it's obvious immediately to any zoologist that the body is 'a decomposed sea-lion. The fore-limb is characteristic and the rather long, narrow skull suggests it was Hooker's Sea-lion (Neophoca hookeri) a species inhabiting the New Zealand area...' The writer, Mr Fraser-Brunner, goes on to suggest that the reported length of the Japanese object (variously as 30 and 180ft long, with a 6ft tail) must be regarded 'as an exaggeration' because sea-lions rarely exceed 15ft, and the elephant-seal, 24ft! Hmmm - he seems to be trying to make the witnesses' observations out to be errors because they don't fit his own theory! Another theory touted around, is that it is a large (possibly Basking) shark, which is frequently mistaken for a plesiosaur when its rotting remains are washed up on British shores. It's early days yet - but we'll cover the developments next issue. Other sources: Times & London Evening Standard 21 July (CR: Paul Devereux, Ian Thompson).



The mysterious mutilations of cattle are continuing, unabated it seems, in the USA, as a heap of clippings from Thomas Adams recently informed us. The unfortunate animals are deprived of their lips, udders, eyes, ears, patches of flesh, blood, jaws, rectums and sexual organs (but not usually all at once). Now, according to our American correspondents, there are reports of other types of animals suffering the same ghastly fate. Some of these we'll give below, some we'll keep back because they'll be dealt with in more detail in the USA Fortean mags (eg: the mystery animal that chews the ears of hogs in Mississippi is featured in the latest ARB - see our journal reviews). We also have an article from Loren Coleman on the strange sheep killings in Ohio, in a future issue. Meanwhile...

HORSES

Austrian authorities were faced with fears of a mystery disease - or sabotage, they couldn't decide which - when eleven horses were found in a critical condition on a stud farm at Marchfield, near

Vienna, in August 1973. The prize racers valued at about £11,000 were said to have suffered 'serious organic damage' - six died. We heard nothing later of any epidemic. Wolverhampton Express & Star 29 August 1973 (Cr: Anthony Smith.)

Johnny Mathews, 6, was in shock after finding his pet donkey foal hanging 5ft from the ground in an appletree, in a field ½mile from his home in Ash, near Farnham, Surrey. It's neck was broken. Police and members of the family were watching the field to protect the foal's mother. Johnny's father reckons that more than one 'maniac' must have been involved because of the weight of the animal, and the awkwardness of access in the tree, and that they must have done the cruel deed in the early hours of 6 Feb. We note that here is another case in 'Surrey Puma' country. Sunday Express 9 February 1975.

A 'sadist' struck twelve times in a fortnight, at the small village of Iver, Bucks, in the first half of April 1975, hacking the tails off ponies - seven times in one stable alone. The 'sadist' always seems to evade the special patrols and vigils mounted by villagers and police. It's not clear whether the whole tail, or just the hair, has been snipped, but the heartbreak among the village children is the same. In our own ghoulishness, we have snipped and collected data from many sources on 'mystery hair clippers' hoping someday to weave an article. This story is from Daily Mirror 15 April 1975.

The assailant that ripped the throats of at least two ponies, at Abington, Massachusetts, at 7am on 2 May 1976, was seen. Phillip Kane was woken by his daughter, and at her insistance, stumbled out into his backyard to check on her 2 ponies tethered there. He was startled to see them, their halters in a tangle, lying on their sides with their throats torn. Kane saw a dog hovering over one of the carcases, eating, and thinks it was a large black and brown German shepherd with some Doberman traits. It may have been fright, he says, but it seemed of huge and fearsome proportions - at least as big as the Shetland ponies themselves. Somehow he managed to chase the creature off, and it vanished into the woods and swamp that dominates the area. A week of police searches has failed to flush the beast out, & there are growing numbers of reports (most prove dead ends) from the frightened residents. Kane says in one week he was called 3 times to Weymouth, twice to Brockton and once to Whitman to identify dogs caught - but none was the giant killer. Others see it crossing the street in daylight with blood dripping from its jaws! It seems very quickly to have become a living legend. Boston (Mass.) Globe 8 May 1976 (Cr: Loren Coleman).

A horse loved by many childen, kept in a field at Catherine Slack, near Halifax, Yorks, was found dead - a wooden stake had been driven through it. There were no clues to whoever perpetrated the horror. Daily Mirror 3 August 1976.

SHEEP

Hmmm - I missed the importance of this next note until I read it again just now. Towards the end of February 1975, a Bucks farmer, Peter Dutton, claimed that two Alsatian dogs killed two of his sheep and hurt 9 others so badly they had to be destroyed. It's not said that he saw them do this, but there's no doubt in local police minds that there were 2 Alsatians on the loose (whose owners they were trying to trace) - so they seem ripe for blaming. When 20 guinea pigs, 2 pet rabbits in one household, and a neighbour's cat and guinea pigs were found killed, the dogs were again blamed (again it's not said the dogs were seen at their savaging). I wonder...mainly because I note that the village concerned is Iver, which about a month later suffered the sadistical snipping of 12 pony tails (see 'Horses' above). The same fiend could be responsible!

EXOTICS

The beheaded carcase of a female bison, one of a herd belonging to the Duke of Bedford, was found on the Duke's estate at Woburn Abbey, Beds. The head, weighing about 30lb, is thought to have been cut off with a large knife and has not been found - nor were there any signs of a struggle, as there should have been because bison are fierce, strong and large. An estate official said: 'This is very much a mystery.' Daily Mirror 4 December 1968 (Cr: Ivan Bunn).

A tiger which mauled a woman at a zoo in Calcutta was saved from execution after being declared not a man-eater (if you'll forgive the chauvinism). However revenge has been had - shortly after it was taken to a tiger reserve it was found dead near its cage 'with body wounds'. London Evening News 5 Sept 1974.

Here's a weird one - the mutilated body of a 4ft porpoise was found at Burton, Lincs, more than 2 miles from the nearest river. RSPCA inspector William Russell said he would ask the

police tc remove it and investigate. He also appealed to any zoo or marineland tc check if they had any missing - suggesting that someone stole and maimed the creature, a more likely possibility in his mind than that it swam up the rivers from the sea and came to grief, or that someone found it by the sea & took it inland. We heard nothing more on this case. Scunthorpe Star 16 May 1975 (Cr: Nigel Watson).

A red deer, kept at the pet's corner in Sherdley Park, St Helens, Lancs, was found 'brutally butchered' in a blood-stained compound - or rather what was left of him was found, for according to police it had been a thorough and professional job that left behind only the parts 'that could not be sold'. Police said: 'We're convinced the animal was slaughtered to be sold as venison.' Ten rabbits were also missing. Coincidentally a footnote to this report mentions that in the first 3 days of the deer season at Dordogne, France, 2,667 were killed -- and far away in England there is a faint echo of the deer-folk's agony. Daily Mirror 20 October 1976.

SKIN GAMES

The mention of a headless bison serves as an entrée for a collection of skinned animals in our files.

Following the mysterious slaughtering of a donkey at Crowthorne and a dog at Guildford, the Surrey and Berkshire RSPCA were warning pet-owners to keep their animals close at hand.They mention the latest incident in a series in the area in the 'past few months - that of a gypsy boy's pet sheep at Bray, Berks. Mrs Pam Peterson of Sandhurst, who found the animal, said it was stripped of skin and meat from the neck down. **Shades of Skippy (d.1967) who suffered the reverse of this fate - ie the missing parts were from her shoulders upwards.) The RSPCA spokesman said: 'The killer was obviously experienced in slaughtering animals.' Sunday Mirror 3 November 1975.**

Police were hunting 'rustlers' near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who had shot and skinned 13 sheep. The Times 28 July 1976 (Cr: Ion Will.)

Any occult significance we could knowingly attatch to the note - that in the past week 23 dogs, supposedly whippets, had been found skinned in Dorset, Avon and Somerset - is dispelled as 3 more were found in a field at Corfe, near Taunton, Somerset. Police and RSPCA investigators are not turning up much, and speculate that they were killed for their skins or used in black magic rites. But who's ever heard of a whippet-skin coat - and handy though it is for authorities to blame such deeds on nebulous 'black magic rites' (in much the same way puzzled archeologists used to lable enigmatic artifacts as 'ritual objects') there is very little we can find to confirm either 'occult' practice. That was from the Daily Telegraph 11 January 1977 - and the next day the same paper reports a true magical practice - the transmutation of evidence (or at least statements about evidence) to conform with the most likely (that is the most acceptable) theory. It's said the whippets are now 'probably' foxes, and that they were 'probably' netted and clubbed. Just how they could tell that the skinned carcases had been 'netted' I don't know - I suppose it's a traditional poaching method! Whether it has any relevance as another stage in the ritual alteration of data, again I don't know, but I note that the same paper for 1 Feb 1977 recorded the reply of the Home Office Under Secretary, Dr Shirley Summerskill,to a Commons question on this or a similar matter. She said that police and RSPCA were investigating cases in which foxes were killed by strychnine for their pelts. (Cr: Mrs Valarie Martin; RTA Hill).

Three 'gentle family' dogs were maimed in the week prior to the account in the Oklahoma City Times 5 April 1977, in that city. One dog belonging to Kathy Hauton returned after a week's disappearance with the fur and skin cut away from a patch on its abdomen. Then her other two dogs vanished and returned in the same condition. Humane Society think there was an attempt to skin them alive and they escaped - a spokesman for the City's Animal Welfare Division thought they were victims of an acid attack -- but why confined to one woman's pets? Interestingly, he mentions that in the same 'general vicinity we had incidents several years ago, where animals were set on fire after being doused with a flammable liquid.' (Cr: Thomas Adams).

A little later, on our side of the great water...the remains of a black whippet was found partially skinned and beheaded, on wasteground at Mansfield Woodhouse, Notts. Police suspect 'Black Magic' (gasp!) and have frozen the carcase while they, umm 'make inquiries'. Newcastle-upon-Tyne Journal 15 April 1977. (Cr: Paul Screeton).

SOME WILD THEORIES

The USA cattle mutilations have been blamed on some exotic culprits, ranging from secret (possibly Mithraic-type)

cults operating among the slaughterhouse men, or US Army, to a revival of Meso-American religion with its bizarre ritual slayings, to the more Western cults of both witchcraft and black magic; to UFOs. One story of the latter type, we find in the often dubious Midnight 8 November 1976:

Ted Nelson and his son, of Fairfax County, Virginia, were walking on the shore of Broke Lake, on 13 August 1976, when a 'hot red-orange' circular craft, with windows around the rim, silently landed on the opposite shore, about 800yds away. It seemed to spurt flame as it landed on an extended tripod - then took off after about 5 minutes. (There's a photo of him with a drawing of what they saw, below...)

Though Nelson and son suffered no subsequent ill effects, it seems the UFO left broken branches, scorched earth, burned and maimed squirrels and dead fish. A Virginia wildlife official confirmed the deaths, and said he too believed that a UFO was responsible. Indeed, Fairfax County police said they had received over 30 calls from spotters of a UFO at that time, and that radar operators at Dulles Airport had tracked the object. (Cr: Gary L Abbott).

Another factor is that undoubtedly there are some loonies on the loose. Consider the report in the Daily Mirror 14 May 1976 - that an anonymous phone-caller told the RSPCA at Mansfield, Notts, of a secret society calling themselves SASA, the Small Animals Stranglers' Association. He said they were sadists who stole animals, took them into the countryside and slowly strangled them, with side bets on how long each victim would take to die. He said they met in local pubs to plan their expeditions, and that among others they had taken dogs, rabbits and a goat. Well - you can imagine the dilemma of the RSPCA, wondering if the call itself **was a hoax. The Mansfield RSPCA Inspector said he was taking it seriously "in view of some of the things that twisted people are capable of doing." And well he might...for we have already noted the story of the skinned black whippet in that area (see bottom p28) this April, and note yet another evil doings, this time the drowning of 8 dogs in a stagnant pool on the Welbeck Park Estate, near Mansfield. Police suspected poachers getting rid of troublesome dogs - but an RSPCA spokesman, seemingly ignorant of the malignant SASA,commented only that they thought it unlikely. Daily Telegraph 2 June 1977 (Cr: Mrs V Martin).**

Now we come into really bizarre territory - animal mutilations mixed with an outrageous SF strain that makes you wonder if there is more to the MIB-theory than meets the Third Eye, and makes assassination-mania look like mere paranoia. Ponder on this piece, from Dr Hunter Thompson's diary coverage of Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign in Florida:

'Last night, on this same radio station, I heard a warning about "a new outbreak of dog mutilations in Coconut Grove." The disc jockey reading the news sounded angry and agitated. "Three more mongrel dogs were found castrated and barely alive tonight," he said,"and investigating officers said there was no doubt that all three animals were the victims of the same bloodthirsty psychotic - a stocky middle-aged Cuban known as 'Castrato' - who has terrorized dog-owners in Coconut Grove for the past three months."'

'"Today's mutilations, police said, were executed with the same sadistic precision as all the others. According to the owner of one victim, a half-breed Chow watchdog named Willie, the dog was 'minding his own business, just lying out there in the driveway, when all of a sudden I heard him yelping and I looked out of the door just in time to see this dirty little spic shoot him again with one of those electric flashlight guns. Then the sonofabitch grabbed Willie by the hind legs and threw him into the back of an old red pickup. I yelled at him, but by the time I got hold of my shotgun and ran out on to the porch, he was gone. It all happened so fast I didn't even get the license number.'"'

'The voice on the radio paused for a long moment, then dipped a few octaves and went on with the story: "Several hours later, police said, Willie and two other dogs - both mongrels - were found in a vacant lot near the Dinner Key yacht marina. All three had been expertly cas-

trated..."'

'Another long pause, followed by a moaning sound as the radio voice seemed to crack and stutter momentarily...And then it continued, very slowly: "The nature of the wounds, police said, left no room for doubt that today's mutilations were the work of the same fiendish hand responsible for all but two of the 49 previous dog castrations in Coconut Grove this year."'

'"'This is definitely the work of Castrato,' said Senior Dog Warden Lionel Olay at a hastily called press conference late this afternoon. 'Look at the razor work on this mongrel chow,' Olay told reporters. 'These cuts are surgically perfect, and so is this cauterization. This man you call "Castrato" is no amateur, gentlemen. This is very artistic surgery - maybe 50 or 55 seconds from start to finish, assuming he works with a whip-steel straight razor and a 220-volt soldering iron.'"'

'"Olay ended the press conference on a humorous note, urging reporters to 'work like dogs' until this case is cracked. 'And if any of you people own mongrels,' he added,'either keep them out of Coconut Grove or have them put to sleep.'"'

'"Meanwhile," said the newscaster, "South Miami police have warned all dog owners in the area to be on the lookout for a red pickup truck cruising slowly in residential neighborhoods. The driver, a small but muscular Cuban between 40 and 50 years old, is known to be armed with an extremely dangerous high-voltage electric weapon called a 'Taser' and is criminally insane."'

Well Hunter Thompson is no mean artist himself, and I'd be interested to hear from any reader in Florida who can find us any further information on Jack the Castrato. The story (from Rolling Stone 3 June 1976) contains one paradox which is absurd enough to suggest that the story did not spontaneously generate in his head - which he admits was 'full of speed, booze and Percodan.' Simply - why would any sadist out to hurt mongrels bother to cauterize their wounds, and then dump them where they could die before they were found? And where the hell did he get a classic SF-type ray gun? (Cr: J Michell).

This brought to mind another couple of notes we had here, both from the Newport News, Virginia, Daily Press of November 1976 (Cr: Gary Abbott). The first dated 5th Nov, tells of a bar of radioactive material missing from a car that was stolen, stripped and abandoned in a wood at Milton, a suburb of Boston, Massachusetts. The Cobalt 57 was in the toolbox of the car - we are not told why! The second story of snatched ominous implements was dated 13th Nov - that a nuclear testing tool, identified only as a 'Troxler Model 2401', said to be 'potentially dangerous to humans', was stolen from a Virginia Highway Department storage shed at Petersburg, Va.

With 'criminally insane' madmen armed with malignant technological weaponry the world is looking more like a Marvel Comic everyday. Stan Lee, you have much to answer for! ...but we'll stop here as we're slipping into other topics.

ANOTHER 'UFO' CASE?

As we go to press a story has come to light about a baffling death of 15 ponies on Dartmoor. Their bodies, described as 'mangled, torn and crushed' were found by Alan Hicks, a petshop owner, strolling with his family at the Cherry Brook Valley beautyspot, near Postbridge. They were all grouped within a hundred yard section. There were no cliffs or anything from which they could have fallen in the marshy grassland, and all appeared to have died at the same time. By the time the RSPCA investigated only 48 hours later, the bodies had decomposed enough to mask the cause of death. A spokesman for the Animal Defence Society and Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society, who made a joint investigation, said the ponies had broken bones and torn arteries. According to one paper one pony had a broken neck and their bodies had decomposed to skeletons with alarming speed (Mirror).

Theories of death by poisoning, disease, malnutrition and shooting were soon eliminated. The main theory - and we note the readiness of the papers to headline this tack - was that a UFO flew low over the area,'creating a vortex which hurled the ponies to their deaths.' - the words of John Wyse, of the Devon UFO Centre, who led his group over the area bristling with geiger counters, metal and UFO detectors. The last note we have to date proposes a theory by Ruth Murray, president of the Animal Defence Society. She thinks they were stampeded by rowdies in a Landrover-type vehicle which could have smashed into the sides of some ponies. But...no pony is going to stand still to be rammed, and then 15 of them crawl off together to die. Nor would this account for the apparently abnormally rapid decomposition. Mrs Murray bases her theory on her discovery of a 'skidmark' on the ground

CONT ON p33...

FISH FALLS AND WHIRLWINDS

by ROBERT SCHADEWALD

Fish-falls may not be the damnedest Fortean phenomena, but they are certainly an interesting study. There are so many cases on record that no one seriously denies that they happen. Rather, explainers are generally stuck to a single security blanket, the whirlwind. It's my intention to remove some of the fuzz from the blanket.

Before proceeding further, let it be said that many fish-falls have been caused by whirlwinds. For instance, on November 12th, 1913, a tornado cloud dropped fish at Quirindi, N.S.W., Australia (1). On June 11th, 1921, fishermen were drenched with seawater and pelted with fish by a waterspout near Avery Island, Louisiana (2). There are several other cases where a whirlwind is the obvious or probable explanation.

There are many more cases where the whirlwind explanation can't be effectively refuted. For instance, some of the herring falls upon the coastal regions of the British Isles could be due to waterspouts. Herring are found near the surface of the sea in very dense schools. Waterspouts are associated with violent squalls. If herring are found thinly and widely scattered over a coastal area after an extremely violent storm, most people would accept that they might have been picked up at sea by a waterspout and dropped on land.

But Fort raised several objections to the whirlwind theory as an explanation of all fish-falls. First of all, whirlwinds are seldom reported in association with fish-falls. Second, there is the apparent segregation whereby fish, and perhaps only one species of fish, fall unaccompanied by mud, lilypads or pond-debris. Third, whirlwinds scatter their acquisitions at random, whereas fish often fall into a very small area. Fourth, falls into small areas sometimes occupy a fairly long period of time, and occasionally cease temporarily and then begin again. Fifth, the strange absence of falls of tadpoles when there have been so many falls of fish and frogs(3).

It is worthwhile to return to the scattered herring for a moment. Only the first objection really applies, and that not very strongly. Generally a violent storm is accompanied by low clouds, and a waterspout could easily pick up its cargo of herring at sea, lift up, and then surreptitiously dump it from above the clouds.

But consider the famous Mountain Ash fish-fall of February 9th, 1859. At the time of the fall, it was pouring rain and a stiff breeze was blowing from the southwest. John Lewis, a sawyer, was preparing to cut a piece of timber when the fish began to fall on him. There were actually two falls, each about two minutes long, and with a ten-minute break between them. The fish were minnows and freshwater sticklebacks from somewhat over an inch up to five inches long. They fell in an extremely limited area, 80 yards by 12 yards, and very thickly. Lewis reported that he was hit by several, got one down his neck and several in his hatbrim (4). There must have been at least half a dozen per square yard, probably more.

The Mountain Ash fish-fall presents several enigmas. First of all, one might ask where sticklebacks can be found so densely. The

male stickleback is a pugnacious little fellow who stakes out a patch of stream or pond bottom and, except for his mate, runs all other sticklebacks out. There is no such thing as a school of sticklebacks. Where would a whirlwind get so much ammunition?

Then there's the problem of concentration. Continuing with the ammunition metaphor, the following comparison is instructive. A full choke shotgun must be able to put at least 70% of its charge inside a 30" circle from a range of forty yards. A very skillful gunsmith might coax it up to 90% for a selected charge. So most of the charge of a tightly choked shotgun spreads in a cone with apex about 1° 12'. If the charge strikes at an angle, the pattern is elongated. By this standard, if the 80 yard by 12 yard pattern of fish at Mountain Ash came from a full choke whirlwind, said whirlwind was no more than a third of a mile away.

Finally, there's the time element. Picture a union whirlwind dropping fish in one place for two minutes, taking a ten minute coffee-break, and then resuming work. Not a very convincing picture.

I have long wondered about the aerodynamic properties of falling fish. On May 9th, 1977, I dragooned my friend Ned Dexter into assisting me with the following experiment. We bought several dozen suckers averaging $2\frac{1}{8}$" in length and 23 grains in weight (about 1/19th oz). These were dropped one by one from the rail of a bridge $114\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the Mississippi River. The falling fish were filmed with a Super-8 movie camera set at its highest frame rate, which was determined to be 29·14 frames per second.

Fall time <u>in vacuo</u> would have been 2·67 seconds. Actual fall time of fifteen fish were measured by counting frame, and they varied from 3·79 to 4·24 seconds, with a mean of 4·10 seconds. Terminal velocity can be calculated from fall time, and the average works out to about 34·1 feet per second, or 23·2 miles per hour. Timing uncertainties suggest an error of perhaps 5%.

Terminal velocity is the velocity at which aerodynamic drag exactly equals the force of gravity. Assuming all minnow-like fish have about the same aerodynamic properties, terminal velocity of a four-inch stickleback should be something like

$$23{\cdot}2\sqrt{4/2{\cdot}125} = 31{\cdot}8 \text{ m.p.h.}$$

The updrafts in thunderstorms and whirlwinds often far exceed these velocities, so there's no problem lifting the fish once they're in the air. But the plot thickens. Suppose a whirlwind has an upward velocity component of 60 miles per hour (88 feet per second). Let us put a bucket of two and four inch fish into the bottom of the whirlwind and let it discharge them at a height of 5,000 feet. The terminal velocities of two and four inch fish are 33·1 and 46·8 feet per second. So the two inch fish will rise at (88 - 33·1) = 54·9 f.p.s., and the four inch fish at (88 - 46·8) = 41·2 f.p.s. When the two inch fish are discharged at the top after about 91 seconds the four inch fish will have risen to only about 3,750 feet. The four inch fish will reach the top about 30 seconds later (5). As the whole system is spinning, one would expect a whirlwind to rather efficiently sort fish by size, with each size discharged in a different direction, depending upon the time it arrived at the top.

If fish raised by a whirlwind then fall through a varying horizontal wind, there will be further sorting by size. And horizontal wind velocity always varies with altitude, slowing substantially near the ground.

One further point: Great Britain and my native Minnesota are very nearly the same size. Tornadoes are extremely rare in the British Isles, but Minnesota averages seventeen tornado touchdowns per year, with perhaps another twenty reports of funnel clouds (6). The "Land of 10,000 Lakes" has 4.8% of its surface covered with lakes, thousands of miles of rivers and streams, and a couple of hundred miles of Lake Superior shoreline. I have many reports of fish-falls from Great Britain, but none whatever from Minnesota.

Robert J Schadewald - June 77

CONT/

References

1. INFO Journal 10, p23. "Falls: Fishes, Ice and straw."
2. EW Gudger, "More Rains of Fishes", Annals and Magazine of Natural History, 10th series, No 13, Jan. 1929, p22
3. C Fort, Books, p85f, p91f, p545f.
4. C Fort, Books, p83f gives an account drawn from most available references.
5. Figures are approximate; the situation is actually much more complex.
6. Tornado statistics from U.S. Weather Bureau. Just a week ago (on May 21st) a tornado touched down about 30 miles away, doing little damage and causing no injuries. A few minutes later, there was an un-Fortean report of a "fall" of tree branches a few miles away.

PONY DEATHS cont from p30...

where the ponies grazed. If anything, the single 'skidmark' - surely her idea of a careening Landrover demands a whole tangle of tracks? - is more consistent with the so-called UFO 'landing trace'. We await further revelations, and the results of other UFO researchers. Story compiled from: Sheffield, Yorks, Star 14 July (Cr: Tim Jones); Daily Telegraph (cr: Judith Gee), Daily Mirror (Cr: Bob Forrest), Daily Mail (Cr: Lionel Beer, Judith Gee) all 15 July; Daily Mirror 16 July (Cr: R Forrest); Sunday Express 17 July 1977. Our guess is that they died sometime around 12/13 July.

LETTERS cont from p5...

I would not agree with John Keel's view that we should 'seriously question' all the airship incidents merely because the Hamilton case turned out to be a joke (I think 'hoax' is somewhat inappropriate). Obviously we should question all accounts, historical or modern, but I do not think it is proper to suggest that because Case A is a hoax, then Cases B through Z are hoaxes also. Undoubtedly there are hoaxes in the airship accounts which have been located and publicized, but a 'blanket condemnation' would be as undesirable as a 'blanket endorsement'.

Also one point about Vallee's role in the Hamilton case: You mentioned (Ref 1) that Vallee had quoted the entire account which originally appeared in the Yates Center Farmer's Advocate of 23 April 1897. Actually, Vallee omitted portions of the original 'affidavit' and changed some words in the portions which he did quote. One omission on his part has always intrigued me. He quotes Hamilton's remark that the airship 'was occupied by six of the strangest beings I ever saw,' but omits the following sentence: 'There were two men, a woman and three children.' I often wondered if this was done deliberately, so as to heighten the impression of 'hideous' beings. After all, to have been recognizable as men, women and children they could not have been too 'hideous' or strange-looking. Of course, the recent events render such a discussion academic, but I mention it for whatever it may be worth.

GIANT 'TADPOLE'

From James Colman, Lowestoft:

Recently, an aerial survey of the Hebrides was made by the Seals Research Unit, which used to be based at Lowestoft. On the island of Stockay, a large object has been found. It was photo'd amongst the seals and caused a lot of interest. The unidentified object is shaped like a tadpole and is twice the size of common seals. It may be a Nessiteras type animal, but all information is now being withheld. That is all I know.

It is probably covered by the Official Secrets Act, as the Seals Research Unit is a government organization and isn't likely to publish the information.

((Mr Colman did not elaborate further or include his address. If anyone can shed light on this interesting tad-bit please let us know - meanwhile we'll be trying to contact the SRU. - Ed))

'ALIENS AMONG US'

From Derek Longhurst, London:

A few notes to add to Peter Roberts' article 'Aliens Among Us' (FT19).

The Monarch butterfly has been reported about 200 times in Britain since the first capture reported in 1876. It is a native of America (nearly all British specimens resemble the North American sub-species), but only 3 specimens have ever been recorded from the West coast of Ireland, and only 6 from mainland Europe.

Another interesting oddity is the case of the Chequered Skipper. Never a common butterfly, it was only known by

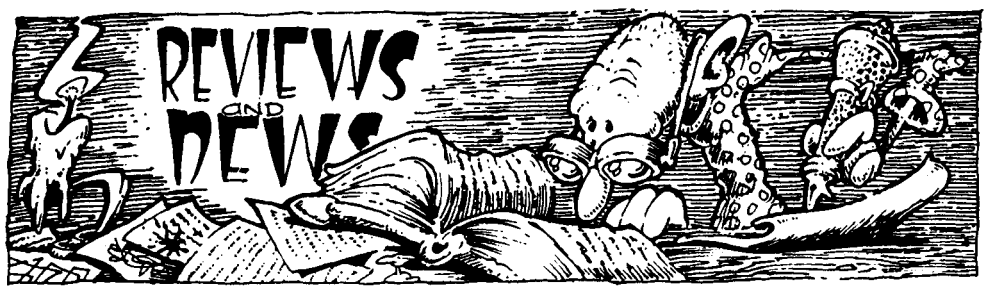
collectors from a few midland counties, until, in 1941, an astonished entomological world learned of its existence in a thriving colony in West Inverness, some 400 miles from the nearest known locality.

The experience of AW Bennett will be familiar to Forteans. Out walking in August 1911, near Tintagel, he noticed several large brown butterflies flying around loosestrife. Recognizing that they were not Silver-Washed Fritillaries (A. paphia.) he managed to capture one in his hat, which specimen he eventually forwarded to an entomological celebrity for identification. The specimen was finally returned, damaged, with 'A. paphia scribbled on the side. Subsequent examination showed the insect to be 'A. pandora', an exotic fritillary from Central Europe. Surely a unique migration would not be expected to bring several butterflies to the same grassy bank?

1872 and 1945 were legendary years for bug-hunters. These were exceptional for the appearance of unusual butterflies and the presence in large numbers of rarer species. Thus 50 Queen of Spain Fritillaries and 35 Bath Whites in 1872, 36 Queen of Spain Fritillaries and 650 Bath Whites in 1945, along with 31 Long Tailed and 3 Short Tailed Blues.

Our rarest native butterfly, the Black Hairstreak, is found in a few midland counties, particularly the old area of Huntingdonshire. However in 1919, larvae were found by AA Tullett near Haslemere, Surrey (Puma fans will know the area well), and six adult insects were bred.

I would refer interested readers to EB Ford's work Butterflies (Collins, 1945), where he refers to many similar occurences. (Other information from A Butterfly Book by Sanders - OUP, 1955).



HARDBACKS

The Jersey Devil by JF McCloy & Ray Miller Jr. (Middle Atlantic Press, Box 263, Wallingford, PA 19086, USA; 1976; $8.00.) -- For 240 years countless stories have circulated throughout southern New Jersey about a creature, part-legend part-fact, that emerges from the desolate region of the coastal Pine Barrens and periodically, for a few hours or days, terrorizes local communities. The earliest reports of the 18th & 19th centuries are of a legendary nature and give a variety of fanciful explanations for the origin of the monster. It was not until 1909 that really useful reports for today's Fortean researcher appeared in the local press. In January of that year the 'phenomenon' appeared in 30 different towns and left numerous footprints to substantiate eye-witness reports. Naturally the descriptions vary to some extent, but the consensus suggests an amalgam of features that would tax the imagination of Hieronymus Bosch. That it is zoologically improbable, if not impossible, is reason enough to explain why it has received scant attention from the authorities.

Varying 18 inches to 20 feet in size, the Jersey Devil is said to have a kangaroo's body, dog's head with the face of a horse, bat's wings, pig's feet, and a forked tail. He is impervious to cannonballs, flapping imperturbably away on leathery wings after receiving a direct hit from a Commodore who happened to be playing with a big gun when the Devil came into range. By the end of a week of appearances, in the flap of 1909, the inhabitants of the Delaware Valley were in complete terror, many refusing to leave their homes even in broad daylight. Workers stayed away from jobs, and factories and theatres closed. Since then there have been at least two claims that the Devil has been shot. Fort notes one of these in LO!(ch 9) from 1925. The only other report he has is of the showman who attatched tin wings and green whiskers to a kangaroo and exhibited it as the Jersey Devil. Fort wrote to the farmer who claimed to have shot it, but reported wryly: 'I have had an extensive, though one-sided, correspondence, with people who may not be, about things that

probably aren't.'

In 1951, the JD was on the rampage again, leaving tracks in deserted areas and being associated with reports of dismembered poultry, cats and dogs. There is no doubt the JD is another of the weird beasts that inhabit the hinterland where our 3 dimensions merge into...what? McCloy & Miller have done some valuable research looking through the early newspapers to compile this collection of reports, though, as they say in their introduction, many accounts were omitted to avoid repetition. Though the sources of individual cases are not cited, there is a list of books and papers consulted, also an index, maps and other illustrations. The book is a useful addition to the monster-hunter's library. Colin Bord.

Alternate Realities by Lawrence LeShan (Sheldon Press 1976; £3.95; pp232; notes) -- Quietly and surely there is beginning to emerge a new school of phenomenology (the study of appearances). After the work of Husserl (d.1938) fell into obscurity, the hiatus was bridged by the modern awareness of the transience, ephemerality and paradoxical nature of phenomena and their existence. This awareness arises from two main sources: the discoveries of modern high-energy physics which are themselves bridging the old 'Cartesian Division' of the universe into objective & subjective (see F Capra's admirable Tao of Physics for many demonstrations of his theme, that the pronouncements of physicists today are often indistinguishable from the teachings of the mystics);and secondly, from the growing reservoir of general experience of altered states of consciousness, whether they be induced by disease, drugs or discipline.

LeShan was thinking about these areas on the frontier of human knowledge long before Capra, but his efforts were aimed towards deriving a general theory of the paranormal. The new phenomenology begins with the postulate that the only consistent criterion for 'Reality' is that which is experienced, whether this be a relationship, pain, vision, thought, dream or hallucination etc. If you can experience it, it is real; and the more of you who can experience the same thing to the same degree, the more real it is, or becomes (for there is no doubt that 'experiencing' is more than mere sensory perception, but an act of creation involving a reflexive relationship between individual and the rest of the universe.) In LeShan's first book, The Medium, The Mystic & The Physicist, he came to the realization that all attempts to study 'anomalous phenomena' based on the view that our generally accepted idea of reality is the only reality, are doomed to error, frustration and paradox. In the first place 'the generally accepted idea of reality' is a myth, varying widely from individual to individual, and from discipline to discipline (eg scientific orthodoxy compared to, say, consistent ESP, or psychic healing.)

Now 'anomaly' can only be defined in a purely arbitrary way, after you have decided what you will accept as normal. In his first book, LeShan found that there could be many different kinds of 'normal reality', all of them valid as long as they fulfilled their function. It matters little that they are often mutually exclusive from the phenomenological point of view, as long as they function in their role of providing a pattern through which the 2-way creative process of experiencing can work for that particular individual. Fort was coming to similar conclusions from his own studies of phenomena.

In Alternate Realities, LeShan extends his thinking, comparing two main patterns of reality; the physical one of today's scientific and teaching orthodoxy (what he calls the 'sensory' mode)in which phenomena are separated by time and space into unique events; and the view of a universe in which all things and events are interconnected (Fort's 'Continuity') and indivisible (LeShan's 'Clairvoyant' mode). He also identifies two others: the 'Transpsychic' mode, in which events and objects are neither separate nor contiguous, but in transition flowing from multiplicity towards a One; and the 'Mythic' mode in which correspondences, symbols and rituals form the basis of magic, myth and dreams. LeShan admits that he has not explored the structures of the last two in any detail yet and is largely speculating.

This is an important book - a stepping stone on the path to a radical new philosophy (alongside the works of JC Pearce, Langer, Fort, Bradley, Husserl, and even the Trickster Castaneda, and LeShan's own mentors, Henry Margenau & MR Cohen) - and attempts to demonstrate that psychic phenomena, despite being considered 'impossible' in the sensory mode, are logical manifestations in the Clairvoyant universe. The ideas are complex and far-reaching, and LeShan has taken great pains to spell out simply, if a little pedantically, the thinking step by step. RJM Rickard.

The Uses of Enchantment by Bruno Bettelheim (Thames & Hudson 1976; £6.50; pp328; notes, bib, index) --

The uses of the title are fundamentally practical ones. The child is introduced to fairytales about the time he is learning to read, and, argues Prof Bettelheim, the story has to function on a number of levels at the same time if the child's interest is to be held. It is the teaching dimension that receives the main analysis here - how the child is brought to accomodate notions of selfhood, moral obligation, justice, fidelity, courage, love and so on - for Bettelheim sees the the fairytale as a dramatization of an existential crisis, and, more importantly, provides a formula for its resolution.

Prof Bettelheim achieves a fine balance between Freudian and Jungian interpretations, admirably refereed by his own observations. Despite the fact that fairytales are dealt with more extensively in Jungian writings, the Freudian psychoanalytic approach is the more dominant here, since of the two main dramas characterized by these two approaches the crises of puberty are the more immediate and apparent to the child who forcibly identifies with the hero or heroine. In this case, Bettelheim presents discussion and examples of tales that deal with alienation, guilt, identity problems, masturbation, menstruation and Oedipal conflicts. The other main drama, extensively discussed in Jungian literature, is the role of the personal and unconscious forces and archetypes in the voyage to selfhood and psychic unity, and the various relationships between the elements of these forces and symbols precipitated in the child's psyche as he responds to or withdraws from his external environment.

Perhaps it is only through studies, ably represented by this book, of our own complexities that we can begin to understand the nature of the external world and its phenomena. Here, the key issues are clearly and simply set out for psychologist and layman alike. RJM Rickard.

The Paradise Papers by Merlin Stone (Virago/Quartet Books 1976; paper, £2.50; pp275; charts, bib, index, photos). The Virgin by Geoffrey Ashe (RKP 1976; £5.25; pp262; notes bib, index, photos) -- In the Beginning God was a Woman... One of the most fascinating, important and far-reaching periods in the history of mankind must have been the time during which patriarchy, as an ideal for man and God, emerged to triumph and eventually suppress the ideal of matriarchy. Ms Stone set out to discover what could be known about those old matriarchal religions, and why they declined before the rising sun of a male God.(She notes that some of the oldest religions had a female Sun God!) concentrating her study on the Middle East and the emergence of the misogynistic Mosaic laws. Despite Ms Stone's clear bias (the book is subtitled 'The Suppression of Women's Rites') the book is perhaps the best (and most readable) study since Graves' The White Goddess.

Ms Stone points out that the early Goddesses were not just worshipped for their beauty, sexuality or fertility. The Great Mother was, in a way, beyond mere sexuality, being the source of all things, especially knowledge, wisdom and the law. It was only in the transition period, and to some extent in reaction to the more materialistic patriarchal ideas, that the attributes of the Great Mother were fragmented into whole pantheons of gods - a device that reinforced the male dominated religion (eg the randyness of Zeus before an increasingly ineffective Hera). It is this early personification of Wisdom that Ashe sees as the possible origin of the readiness with which Christians accepted the cult of the Virgin Mary. Once there was little place for Mary in the Christian cosmology beside a few brief mentions in the Gospels, and the natural esteem of her role as Mother of Jesus. But, as Ashe points out, traditions are usually retroactive, and it hardly seems credible that the cult of Mary was only recently formalized, historically speaking.

Ashe weaves around the central theme of a biography of the Virgin Mary (from all known sources, including inspired ones), the arguments about whether or not the Marian cultus was an intrusion into Christianity "from the dark realms of natural religion." The book's style makes for a hard reading slog, but if you are interested in such problems, you'll find the effort worthwhile. Ashe's own brave conclusion is also very interesting: "Far from treating Mary-worship in Protestant style as a disease of Christianity, we should confess that in at least one crisis it actually saved Christianity, which would have dwindled to nullity for the lack of what it supplied." This supports Ms Stone's assertion that a male-religion devoid of female attributes in its God is functionally incomplete, if not useless spiritually. If both writers are right, then the Marian cultus looks like growing even more, as in parts of the world it rivals even the worship of Christ. This growth will naturally restore and depend upon the long neglected attributes of the Great

Mother, echoing the days of the Goddesses with their (dependent) male consorts (*eg* Cybele & Attis, Isis & Osiris, Aphrodite & Adonis, Anath & Baal, etc). RJM Rickard.

We regret that because of a review backlog and shortage of space, some books received will be held over to the next issue. These include Berlitz's Without a Trace, Space Time Transients (Persinger & Lafreniere), & Handbook of Unusual Natural Phenomena (Corliss),etc.

PAPERBACKS

Rhythms of Vision by Lawrence Blair (Paladin 1976; £1.95; pp255; index illos). Unfinished Animal by Theodore Roszak (Faber 1976; £2.95; pp 271; index of names) -- It must by now be obvious to anyone with an interest in any of the diverse fields of paranormal phenomena that the last decade or so has seen the emergence of a new wave, or second stage,approach to the investigation of these enigmas. A small number of researchers, notably John Keel & John Michell with their significant contributions to UFOlogy and its adjacent mysteries, have sought to demonstrate that all extraordinary manifestations that cannot be explained by conventional means are very likely linked; that they are, moreover, attributable to a single all-pervading origin; in fact, different facets of the same controlling force. This book is a further application of the approach exemplified by Keel's contention that we should seek to dissolve the 'frames of reference' which seriously hinder our ability to assess as a whole aspects of the supernatural and psychical previously considered unconnected. It should be said, however, that Lawrence Blair's approach has obviously been arrived at independently, and is spiritual in nature.

His scope and conclusions go much further than simply suggesting a psychic solution to the 'damned' facts science ignores or yet hopes to explain. His underlying concern is to convey an impression of the amazing and intricate uniformity of order and pattern permeating all levels of being. He shows that Man himself, his natural and artificial environment, his social, spiritual and perceptive attitudes, and the non-material forces that surround and influence him, all conform to a fluid yet essentially unchanging symmetry, awe-inspiring in its beautiful efficiency.

Many thoughtfully chosen illustrations here must be worth volumes of explanation.

Blair, and Lyall Watson's foreward, refer to the collective pool of unconsciousness, the reservoir of inspiration held partially responsible for the modern acceleration of ideas, in contrast to the previously held notion that most major innovations originate with an individual or small group whose work did not gain general acceptance in their lifetimes (Charles Fort is an obvious relevant example). Worth considering also is Blair's opinion that our spiritual (and possibly even physical) evolution is in the process of developing to a higher stage of perception, almost entirely despite ourselves, and that we are being inexorably drawn toward a totally unique 'overview' of our existence and purpose by forces beyond our control and understanding.

The book has its faults of course: the end is a little perfunctory (forgiveable considering its scope and the nature of the subject hardly lend themselves to pat conclusions); it falls victim to an automatic reeling-off of anecdotal globs of information in the last few pages when mopping up the 'fringe-fringe' groups and beliefs not covered in the main text; there were even a few factual errors (eg twice listing the publishing date of Adamski's Flying Saucers have Landed as being "in the mid-twenties", and the re-discoverer of leys rendered as Charles Watkins). Despite this, it is well-written, and at times quite eloquent, and can be recommended with very few reservations as an important contribution to Forteanism. Stan Nicholls.

The book by Roszak covers much the same ground (what he calls the 'Aquarian Frontier'), but the style, approach and depth makes an interesting contrast to Blair's book.

Roszak identifies 12 major 'points of entry' into the Aquarian frontier: Judeo-Christian revivals (charismatic movements like the Jesus Freaks, etc); Eastern religions and their new followings; esoteric studies (occult philosophies, etc); eupsychian therapies (Primal, Transpersonal, Arica, Gestalt, Jungian, EST, Silva Mind Control, etc); body therapies (bioenergetics, orgonomy, T'ai chi chuan, martial arts, etc); etherealized healing (psychic surgery,acupuncture, aura, yoga, reflexology & other therapies); neoprimitivism & paganism (shamanism, wicca, primitive lifestyles, etc); organicism (whole & marcobiotic foods, biorhythms, etc); wild science (biofeedback, Kirlian, visionary physics, thanatology, ESP & dream research, drugs, etc); psychic & occult groups (Cayce, Geller, Eckankar,

The Process, etc); psychotronics (neural cybernetics, media mysticism, etc) and pop culture (SF, acid rock and dope,etc).

Blair has a doctorate in contemporary mystical studies; Roszak is a professor of history and sees the many movements of modern enlightenment, not as expressions of a mystical urge toward a unifying vision of nature as Blair does, but in terms of an evolving sociology of human consciousness - ie we are in transition to a new type of society, with new information demands and new ways of communicating. Roszak's study is the tighter of the two, and in my view, the more rewarding in terms of the picture it paints of today's individual, barely able to vocalize his urgent quest, and bewildered by the range of paths to salvation before him. Nor does Roszak ignore the warts of these paths, their dark, slippery and ephemeral nature often lurking behind a slick glossy contemporary image of fashionable commercialism. But this is what Roszak is interested in - the phenomena of human society and aspirations - whereas I found Blair eager to rush through his survey to get to what he was really interested in, the formulation of his ideas about the ordered complexity of universal phenomena. RJM Rickard.

Psychic discoveries behind the Iron Curtain (Abacus 1973; £1.95; pp446; bib/notes, index, photos). Handbook of Psi discoveries (Abacus 1977; £1.95; pp342; bib/notes, index, photos). The ESP papers (Bantam 1976; 65p/$1.95; pp236; small bib, index, photos). All by Sheila Ostrander & Lynn Schroeder. -- The authors have performed a valuable & Herculean feat of reading yards of Soviet literature on paraphysical and parapsychological research, and have distilled from it the most useful essence. The result is an invaluable set of reference material on paranormal data - a veritable mine of new and relevant information that we cannot do full justice to in this limited space. Suffice it to say that most if not all areas you could think of, and some you are bound not to have, are here. The Handbook also contains instructions for building your own equipment and experiments. Essential for Forteans in its fascinating glimpses of Soviet thought on Fortean problems. RJM Rickard.

Mysteries of Time & Space by Brad Steiger (Sphere 1977; 95p; pp283; bib, index, photos) -- the best of Steiger's books released in UK for a long time. He uses Fortean data (anomalous & impossible fossils, apparent time travel & teleportation, and MIB phenomena) to support his notion that 'Reality' is plastic, and that we are unthinking pawns in some sinister 'Reality game'. It ends optimistically, suggesting that we are quite capable of learning the rules and usurping the puppet-masters.

Flying Saucers have landed by D Leslie & George Adamski (Futura 1977; 95p; pp281; bib) -- Desmond Leslie has revised this major classic of UFOlogy for its first UK paperback edition. It chronicles Adamski's contact with the saucer-folk and many speculations on UFOs in Celtic, Indian and Egyptian folk-myth, doubly interesting in the light of the current enthusiasm for the 'Ancient astronaut' concept. This too was the first serious linking of UFOlogy with spiritual and occult teachings, remarkable for its time, and still controversial. Worth getting.

My contact with UFOs by Dino Kraspedon (Sphere 1977; 75p; pp205) -- Again, a welcome paper edition of one of the classics of the field, worth getting if only for its historical value. Kraspedon changed his name to Aladino Felix, and became a bank robber and guerilla in Brazil, threatening to bring in his Venusian allies to defeat the then government. In 1971 he was imprisoned for his crimes and his 5yr sentence commuted to months if he underwent treatment for his mentally disturbed state. This book recounts his contact with a UFO in late 1952, and the teachings (pseudo-mystical and pseudo-scientific) he received from its captain. You must judge their value yourself.

The Humanoids edited by Charles Bowen (Futura 1974; 80p; pp256; refs) -- a reprinting of the modern classic reference on humanoids - the beings associated with UFOs. Expanded from articles in FSR, the leading writers & events (up to 1969) are represented in this valuable research volume. If you don't have it; buy it!

JOURNALS

We welcome journals on exchange, and give a review/listing upon receipt. Readers applying to mags might like to say they saw the mention in Fortean Times. It helps!

INFO Journal 23 (May 77) - Rocky Mountain Medicine Wheels; reevaluation of Tungus pyrotechnics; UFO news; Ancient sailors; Bigfoot & Manglers; Wisconsin lake monster. 24 (Jly/Aug 77) - Coloured rains; Bigfoot; UFO abductions; The Pelee eruption, 1902; Medicine Wheels pt2. 6 issues/yr/ $10.00. INFO: 7317 Baltimore Ave, College Park, MD 20740, USA...or joint sub with FT - see p40.

Pursuit 38 (Spring 77) - Dynamic biology of Little Green Men; 2 tiny footprints; Relativity; 'The Invisible Star' by Carlos Miguel Allende; Fliudice; Extant dinosaurs; Dinosaur graffiti. 39 (Summer 77) - Incorruptible corpses; Sunken aircraft; Pyramids as communications network; Combustible corpses; Demoniality; Faust and the student; Chinese designs in Mexican & Norse ornament. 4 issues/yr/$10.00. Published by SITU: Columbia, NJ 07832, USA.

Nessletter; published by Ness Information Service: Huntshieldford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Aukland, Co Durham, DL13 1RQ. Keeps you up to date on monsternews from other lakes, lochs and loughs too, for $7.00/£1.25.

ARB 6 (June 77) - Profile of Curt Sutherly; religious apparition in Texas; anomalous Texan coin; the Mississippi 'Ear-eater'; phantom cat in Kentucky; freak quake in Indiana (don't worry! it was in 1897!). Anomaly Research Bulletin (ARB) edited by David Fideler: 7098 Edinburgh Drive, Lambertville, MI48144, USA. $3.00/£1.50/6 issues.

Lantern Summer 77 - Kids' invisible playmates; pt1 of a valuable Black Dog study by Ivan Bunn; historical Forteana; UFOs and other gleanings of East Anglian curiosa. 84p/4 issues - write for overseas rates. BSIG: 3 Dunwich Way, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 4RZ.

Vestigia Newsletter 2 (Spring 77) - Results of a field study of the 'Spooklights at Washington Township, New Jersey. Vestigia is a recently formed Fortean study group based in New Jersey; write for details: Box 1183, Perth Amboy, NJ 08861, USA.

NEARA Journal - chronicles the work and concerns of the New England Antiquities Research Association - a pioneering group in the study of pre-Columbian artifacts. Annual sub: $5.00. NEARA: 4 Smith St, Milford, NH 03055, USA.

KRONOS - a journal of interdisciplinary studies - perhaps the most important continuation of Velikovsky's studies today. Recent issues (vol 2, nos 3&4) have contained: Electrical charge of rotating Earth; measurements of orbits; dating the great Mahabharata War; ancient knowledge of Jupiter's bands; Leonardo, rocks & fossils; reactions to Velikovsky's new book Peoples of the Sea; the Sothic chronology of Egypt; and articles by Velikovsky himself. $10.00/4 issues. KRONOS: Warner Sizemore, Glassboro State College, Glassboro, NJ 08028, USA.

The Ley Hunter 77 - *Images in stone*; Herefordshire ley; who was the 'Man of Straw'; magic mounds & fairies; 2 articles on leys & dowsing; the Celtic head mystery; Jubilee beacons. TLH merits our congratulations for surviving its first year in the new format, and for establishing a new professional image. $9.00(airmail)/£2.70/6 issues - or joint sub with FT (see panel p40. TLH: Box 152, London N10 1EP.

MUFOB ns7 (Summer 77) - the voice of New UFOlogy. An important article by Peter Rogerson serves as an effective summary of contemporary radical thought on ufology; Jenny Randles on recent UK contact reports; letters, reviews and PR's labour of love, the continuing catalogue of Type 1 records. $3.00(airmail)/£1.25/4 issues. MUFOB:John Rimmer, 11 Beverley Rd, New Malden, Surrey.

Christian Parapsychologist Dec 1976- St Augustine on psychical research; conference reports; journal & book reviews. March 77 - psychical research & religion; Mrs Piper & survival; a medium 'rescued' by Pentecostalists; discussion of Spiritism vs Spiritualism. $3.00(airmail)/£1.50/4 issues. CP: 284 Earls Court Rd, London SW5 9AS.

Flying Saucer Review 22:6 - landing in Co Durham; UFO causes tidal wave; UFOs and Puerto Rico animal deaths; Australian flap 1909/1910; 50 little green 'frogmen'; UFO photos, landings & sightings. 23:1 - reports on the recent Welsh flap; humanoids in N Staffs & Epping Forest, Venezuela, California, and a sex-encounter in Colombia; a 'solid light' feeler probes room; and more. Now $9.00/£4.20/6 issues. FSR: West Malling, Maidstone, Kent.

BUFORA Journal (Mar/Apr 77) - Lionel Beer's investigations of the Winchester encounters. BUFORA annual sub $10.00/ £5.00/ 6 issues BJ: 95 Taunton Rd, London SE12 8PA.

SOBEPS News - English summary of the Belgian Inforespace. Jan 77 - Bermuda Triangle; more about the Dean 'anti-grav' drive; humanity's cosmic adventure; analysis of Las Grutas, Argentina, photo (1975); the Borinage flyover. March 77 - UFO dynamics; luminous cylinder & beams, June 1968, Epinois; landing at Peruwelz; analysis of Lake Chauvet, France, photo (1952). Inquiries: SOBEPS: Blvd Aristide Briand 26, 1070 Brussels, Belgium.

Clypeus - Italian UFO & Fortean mag, currently reviewing the airship flaps of late 19th & early 20th centuries.

Clypeus: Postale 604, 10100 Torino Centro, Italy.

Fate May 77 - towers of Aksum; WW2 radar mystery; Ojibwa vision quest; Celonese scrying; psychic surgery update; madonna catches thief; plus many notes & fillers. June 77 - UFO hitchhiker; Newport mystery tower; automatic writing; meditation; leaves dance; mystical experiences. July 77 - Clark interviews Mackal on Nessie; ESP; rescuing kids from cults; dowsing rescue; UFO hitchhiker pt 2; psychic healer; satanic accidents?; many small notes. August 77 - Clark/Mackal/Nessie pt2; America's unknown ancestors; haunting; Bermuda triangle; obsession; psychic hunt for child; biomagnetism; exorcism; many notes. Also Curtis Fuller's excellent informative column.

Journal of Meteorology - worthwhile for Forteans interested in weather and other met. freaks. June/July 77 - recent climate changes, recent thunders & lightnings; unusual rainbow; tornadoes. $16.00/£6.50/12 issues. J.Met: Cockhill House, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 9BG.

Undercurrents 23 - mainly an AT mag, but a consistent forum for alternative ideas on anything - sports 2 good relevant articles - One by your editor on Fort & Forteanism; and pt2 of a study of millenial movements in history (& present) founded on 'Paranoia & Conspiracy' by John Fletcher. If not on your newsstands, send 45p to UC: 6 South St, Uley, Dursley, Gloucestershire.

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*** NEXT ISSUE -- is our number 23rd! which deserves some kind of celebration. We hope to have a 'Fortean Funnies' by Hunt Emerson & Steve Moore; Doc Shiels; Loren Coleman; Larry Arnold with pt2 of his mammoth SHC study; mystery illnesses; and encounters with weird beings; and a whole lot more good stuff ***

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